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IN THE

BRITISH MUSEUM

IN A

COURSE OF SIX LECTURES.

BY

J. FREDERICK HODGETTS,

LATE EXAMINER IN ENGLISH TO THE UNIVERSITY AND DISTRICT OF MOSCOW
PROFESSOR IN THE IMPERIAL COLLEGE OF PRACTICAL SCIENCE, AND OTHER
CROWN ESTABLISHMENTS AT MOSCOW.

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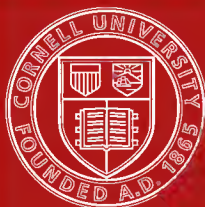
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LONDON

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TO
EDWARD AUGUSTUS BOND, ESQ., LL.D., F.S.A.,
ETC., ETC., ETC.,
THIS LITTLE VOLUME,
IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF HIS KIND AND ACTIVE AID
IN BRINGING BEFORE THE ENGLISH PUBLIC
THIS ATTEMPT TO
ILLUSTRATE THE EARLY HISTORY OF THEIR ANCESTORS,
IS DEDICATED
BY
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P R E F A C E.

THE following Lectures were delivered, by the kind permission of the Officers of the British Museum, to a private audience, necessarily a small one on account of the size of the Anglo-Saxon room, but they were so warmly received by those who honoured me with their presence on the occasion of their delivery, that I have been led to repeat them as Lectures, and to publish them in the form of a book.

For many years past I have been engaged in work which has rendered some degree of philological research indispensable, and in the course of my experience in many parts of the globe I found most civilized nations convinced of the great importance of first studying their own language, history, and development and then those of other lands. England alone, with all her wealth of literature, and with the most interesting of all Teutonic forms of speech, was lamentably behind the rest, choosing to draw her supplies of mythological, linguistic, and historic teachings from a source upon which she had no claim, in the first place, and which was ludicrously ill-suited to her requirements, tastes, and feelings, in the next.

I found that although I had been what in my youth was called well educated, I knew nothing of the real history and structure of our noble tongue, and this wrong

done to me by our wretched system I had to correct in Germany at a comparatively advanced period of my life. In Germany I first learned the history of the English language, and the value of its literature. I learned that our own mythology was a thing to be studied and to be proud of. In Germany, Russia; and Scandinavia, Latin and Greek are studied, but they are not put in the place of the maternal idiom, as if that were unworthy of careful thought.

To our shame be it said, the Germans first discovered the linguistic importance and classic wealth of the English language, and on my return to England I find the hint thrown out by them acted on, although not generally taken up. My friend, Dr. Morris, has done much to awaken us to a sense of the need there is of studying our own language, and to the wealth of materials existing for doing so. Professor Morley has laboured well and zealously in the field; Professor Skeat has produced his valuable Dictionary; Mr. Sweet has compiled an Anglo-Saxon Reader; so that there are some signs of life among us. But these works, excellent as they are, seem not to be so generally known as could be wished. In fact, I believe the "*Historic Outlines of English Accidence*", by Dr. Morris, is more popular on the Continent than in England! The reason of this is that, on the one hand we have been blocked by a false system for so many years, so that it is difficult to get into a new groove now; on the other, the bulk of the nation has not had the opportunity of having these things brought home to them. But the desire to know more about themselves is becoming every day more emphatically expressed; and, feeling the existence of this wish, I was very glad of the suggestion that some degree of publicity should be given to these private Lectures

on Anglo-Saxon History, or, the Tale of Older England as far as it could be evolved from the specimens of Anglo-Saxon Art preserved in the British Museum, and illustrated by them.

The success of my attempt was beyond my most sanguine expectations. To obtain a little form and order on the occasion of the first meeting, I requested the Rev. Sir Talbot Baker, F.S.A., a member of the British Archæological Association, to take the chair. At the conclusion of the Lecture he commented upon some of my remarks in a manner highly expressive of his satisfaction with the soundness of the opinions I had advanced, and his corroboration as an antiquary of the statements I had made.

Professor Ruskin stated that what he had heard from me was a new revelation of truth and poetry for him; that he had had no idea of the wealth and beauty of ancient English teachings until he heard them from my lips; that I had overturned some of his most cherished opinions, but had given him a new field of thought instead. So much I can say, because the matter of my subject is inexhaustible in its beauty and capability of supplying our intellectual wants. His remarks were noticed by the public journals at the time. For his cordial good-will and endeavour to assist me in my object I wish to thank him thus publicly.

My warm thanks are also due to Sir Talbot Baker for his timely support, and also to General Sir James Alexander, who has so ably filled the chair on subsequent occasions.

To Dr. Bond, both my audience and myself are indebted for permission to meet in the Anglo-Saxon room for the purpose of discussing these interesting points; and we owe

Mr. Franks, under whose special direction this department is placed, many thanks for prompt assistance in the use of the room, and in arranging objects for the better convenience of the spectators.

In conclusion, I must express the deep sense of gratification I feel at seeing the hint taken, and at finding that the hammer of Thor is really—as it ought to be—more interesting to English people than the club of Hercules.

J. FREDERICK HODGETTS.

LONDON,

Christmas, 1883.

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LECTURE I.

THE SWORD.

It is my object in these lectures to find in the interesting remains of the so-called Anglo-Saxon period, now carefully and jealously guarded in the British Museum, hints corroborative of our own history, meaning by that expression the history of the English people without any reference to that of the Kelts or of the Romans. With the history of the Kymri we have as little to do as we have with that of the New Zealanders before our settlement in that island. From the Romans we, on our first arrival, took nothing, and though twelve centuries have done their direst to Latinise our tongue, they find it English to the core even now.

The precious relics before us are diverse in their character and bearing, but they are to us pearls of great price, which it is my object to string, as it were, on one thread of historic thought which shall connect them into a whole, and perhaps serve to show English people that they have a history to be proud of and classic times to point to, as truly classical to us as the Ancient Latin world of thought is classic ground to the Modern Italian. Our sires, who came sword in hand and conquered for us this fair land which we all love so well, brought with them from the great saga-hoard of the North a rich inheritance

of mythological, legendary, and historical lore. Some of this has come down to us; and of that inheritance much is to be found under the same roof with these visible and outward signs of the life of our ancestors. We came from Anglia to Britain sword in hand, and with that sword we cut down the half-Romanised Keltic savages who could not hold their own without the aid of their previous conquerors, the Romans, who had in vain tried to make men of them. So far says history as we have it handed down to us. But what is history? How are we even to prove that we are English, that our island is ours by right of conquest; and how do these poor remnants of old metal help us in our search?

A geologist, building up the frame of an extinct giant creature, pieces together certain bones until he constructs a skeleton. His own induction, corroborated by sidelights from natural history, does the rest. Let us try whether this old sword-blade, assisted by knowledge derived from collateral sources, may not in like manner help us to build up something of the story of our race out of the dim myths of the remote past.

Before us is a piece of steel, evidently a sword-blade, and of ancient date. It is double-edged, very massive and weighty; there is a "tang" for the reception of the grip, and a ball at the extreme end of the tang. The grip and the small portion of metal curving downwards we should call the hilt; and when I have used these words to indicate parts of the weapon, I find that I have been using expressions of very high antiquity. Not one is of the Roman source; they are all English. But what is English remotely? In answering this question, let the sword be our guide, as

it was to our warlike forefathers in the olden time. The first word I used in describing the relic was "blade", as we talk of sword-blades now in everyday life. But what does the word remotely indicate? We turn to Greek lexicon or Latin dictionary in vain for a reply; there is no light there to illumine a true English word. We turn to our own kindred, the Germans, who offer us the word "blatt", in the sense of the leaf of a plant. We go farther north, until we come to our own family the Scandinavian dwellers on that land, whence we ourselves have come, and there we find "blæd" as a name in Icelandic for the leaves of the sword-like grass found so constantly in the meres and lakes of the North. Returning home, we find the Northern dwellers in this island talking of a "blad o' grass", and our own sword-blade flashes upon us from the word we use. Once secure in this one Scandinavian word, applying so aptly to a Scandinavian thought, we take an Icelandic dictionary and find that hilt, grip, guard, ball, tang, edge, and cut, are all Scandinavian, common in fact to all the Scandinavian family, and existing as healthily in our own Anglo-Saxon tongue as in the Norrena Tunga of Iceland or the gentler Svenska Språket of Sweden. In going off into the philology of the words I use, I am not forgetting the sword to which they apply, for the very fact of finding those words in the North tempts me to seek for a similar vestige of ancient war in that cradle of our race, and what do I find? The same sword everywhere under the same circumstances as those under which this ancient blade was found. Under a hill, in a grave, the burial place of some stern warrior, buried there with arms and shield to help him at that time when again he shall arise

to march to Odin at the end of the world. These grave-hills are found all over Scandinavia, where, from the scarcity of the population, they have been more respected than with us, who want every square inch of the land we live on, and have little time and less sympathy to bestow on those who have passed away.

If you look at this blade, you will see that it has none of the peculiarities of the *gladiolus*, which grows so luxuriantly in warm climates, and which was as familiar to the Greeks as the sword-grass to the Vikings. The Roman sword was a “gladius”, and reproduces the gladiol leaf; both referring either the idea of the sword to the foliage of nature, or the leaf to the sword, evidently by a similar process of reasoning, though the phenomena are different in external form in each of the two cases.

The aboriginal dwellers in Britain, or, I should rather say, the inhabitants found in the island by the Romans, seem to have adopted something of Roman art. They certainly adopted Roman arms and armour, which we never did. Accordingly, we find the Roman “gladius” copied in bronze in comparatively great quantities in certain places, especially in the beds of rivers, showing how the Britons had been forced into the water by an enemy, where they perished, leaving nothing but the indestructible bronze to tell the tale.

But what chance could the Roman “gladius”, or even the “ensis”, have had against such a weapon as one of those in the British Museum must have been before its decay? The heavily-armed legions of Rome went down before the superior arms and superior weight of the Teutons, as the cuirassiers at Waterloo went down before the unarmoured

Life Guards, who, as the Great Duke observed, “smashed them like lobsters in their shells.” How far less was the hope of the enfeebled Briton in opposing Rome’s conquerors! The sword tells the story. Oppose the “gladius” to the “blade”, and the result is not very dubious. And so we find an imitation “gladius” in rivers *passim*, but the grand war-blade of the Saxon is by his side in his tomb. A man unread in Hume and Smollett, to say nothing of Sharon Turner or our newer lights, might from this position of the sword deduce these facts:—First, that a race had existed which had not been very warlike, in that it copied the Roman sword in a metal more easy to work than iron and steel. Secondly, that this bronze-gladius people were defeated by a big-steel-sword race, who took possession of the land, and buried their royal dead in peace. The relics remaining to us of these big-steel-sword men are identical with those found in similar grave-hills in Scandinavia, and like the words employed for the parts of the sword already alluded to, prove the weapon and the conqueror to have been descended from Scandinavian ancestors. We turn to Scandinavian sources, and we find these swords described.

All through the regions subdued by Scandinavia she left her Hring Mæl, or battle-sword, and we find it introduced among the Franks by the Normans, who, unlike their kindred Saxons, forsook the speech of their fathers, but refined upon their arms. The *longue épée* of the thirteenth century is the Scandinavian blade elongated, and not so broad in proportion as the parent arm. The small projections at the hilt expand into the straight cross guard, which, with the Crusaders, bore fully as mysterious

a meaning as the old pagan form had done. The point could be stuck in the earth and invoked as a cross. So this *longue épée* bore for a time sway over the old Hring Mæl, but in various parts of the land the ancient weapon still lived on. As the feeble Britons had copied the Roman arms, so the Gael, seeing the immense advantage over the Roman weapon, copied the big war-sword in the double-edged *claymore*, which only means "big glaive" or sword, after all. In their inaccessible fastnesses of mountain, moor, and mist, these northern Keltæ still preserve the Saxon blade of their most bitter foes, and in name and shape we trace the kinship existing between these blades. After the introduction of Christianity the grave-mound ceased to be raised over the warrior, who, under the new faith, required no warlike panoply in his tomb; but carved representations of him arise, and we see them scattered about this land and Normandy. The bill, the broadsword, and the bow lived on among the people. Those who opposed the Normans were outlawed, and waged a guerilla warfare on the invaders, who never were at home among the people, as the Norman *longue épée* never became English. Thus the struggle of the two descendants—now widely diverging—of the old Scandinavian stock may be traced in the blade they bore. And it is curious to notice how, in later years, when the Norman spark had glowed its last, the sword returned more to its early English form. In the days of plate armour the blade certainly became longer and more flexible, so as to slip in between the overlapping plates; but just in the hey-day maturity of plate armour, in the time of bluff King Hal, a weapon was employed called the *anelace*, precisely similar to the

Viking sword, only a little broader. Our modern cutlass seems to be a sort of compromise between the Hring Mæl and the Seax, inasmuch as it possesses the curve of the Seax and the single-edge, while in length and stubbornness it strongly reminds us of the more formidable blade worn in war.

If you look carefully into the sword preserved in the glass tomb before you, you will discover a small gold plate let in, upon which certain strange and unfamiliar characters are not unskilfully traced. These characters are Runes, which play so prominent a part in Northern story, and which prove, beyond a doubt, that we are not descended from savage brutes, but from men in a high state of civilisation, widely differing from the civilisation of Greece and Rome in almost every particular, but actually living on, as it were, in spite of us, in the civilisation of our own day. The forms of these letters, being composed almost entirely of right lines, point directly to their having been cut or scratched on wood, or, as in the instance before us, in metal.

The investigations of Professor Max Müller have shown that the farther back we go in tracing the history of words, the more abstract are the ideas which are developed. Thus, instead of being referred to imitations of the sounds heard around him in nature, we discover that early man thought more from the internal or abstract power of the mind than from the external or concrete power. There is, therefore, no root in language which is an echo of the cry of an animal; the roots which live in our spoken tongue to-day were, so to say, infused into the human mind countless ages ago from a higher region, and

appealed to higher thought than what is produced through the medium of the external senses. Instead, then, of finding the living ancient roots of language reproductions of the squeaking, grunting, growling, and hissing of lower forms of life, we discover only such ideas as "refulgent shining," "love," "heaven," "living," etc.; the more external, or concrete roots, expressing more familiar ideas, as striking, running, sounding, and the like. In perfect harmony with this beautiful law we find our Runic alphabet symbolical or emblematical, rather than exactly pictorial, although the figures doubtless do represent some external object connected with the abstract idea for which they stand. Thus the head of the gár, or javelin, stands for *Tyr* or *Tys* (the Sanskrit *Djaus*, Greek *Θεος*, Latin *Deus*), a warrior god. And this letter, standing alone, would represent either that deity, his favourite weapon, the day sacred to him, or war. Again, the letter N is called *nyth*, or *nyd* (German *Noth*), meaning necessity, compulsion, or a knot, and it depicts either the passage of some weapon, indicating tribulation or force, or two ropes crossing each other and forming a knot. This Rune, when alone, meant, therefore, either trouble or marriage; and, in the wedding of a Scandinavian pair, it was drawn by the bridegroom on the finger-nail of the bride. This is the origin of the expression "the marriage knot". In combination with other letters it simply stands for the letter N.

The first example is more interesting than the second, as affording an instance of more remote connection between letter and sound, for the word for lance in early English was *gár*, not *tyr*, *Tyr* being the name of the divinity whose attribute the lance happened to be. There

are forty characters in the *Futhork*, or English alphabet, some of which always stand for words or syllables of common occurrence, and are mere arbitrary signs, as, for example, ʁ, ȝ, ƿ; *and, ing, ethel*. Rich in vowel sounds, the English language has suffered irreparable loss from the introduction of the meagre Latin alphabet, in which characters representing sounds unknown to the Romans could not have existed. The consequence is that the various sounds represented in Runic writing and in the so-called Anglo-Saxon character, by respective forms differing among each other, are now expressed by the same, rendering our orthography uncouth, arbitrary, and difficult to acquire. The letter *A* in modern English does duty for five different sounds: as in *ball*, in *father*, in *man*, in *gain*, in *any* and *many*. *O* also has five different sounds, as in the words *note*, *not*, *word*, *do*, *love*. *I* has four sounds, and the other vowels three. We get mixed with *c, k*, and *q, g* and *j*; while for two specially and emphatically English sounds, *th* and *dh*, we have no representation at all, because, forsooth, the Romans had none! Our forefathers knew better, and their types were correspondent forms, conveying to their minds accurate conceptions of the sound represented; and beyond this they possessed a mystical abstract teaching known only to the priesthood and to the learned. Hence a mysterious veneration soon connected itself with the idea of Runes, and in process of time they were used so much in incantations and spells as to acquire a very disreputable fame. The leader of an army was called the Hertoga, he who leads the Her, or army, and the elder warriors of distinction were called the Heraldor, or elders of the

army. One of the functions of these latter dignitaries was to carry messages from king to king, or from chief to chief. These messages were cut in Runes on a staff of beechwood called "bók"; hence the staff was named the "book-staff", a term applied by our forefathers to the letters of their written alphabet; and still used in Germany and Scandinavia to denote the same thing—i.e., a letter. We, degenerate sons of Odin that we are, have flung away our birthright in casting aside that which was born with us, and have adopted a strange and foreign thing instead; we have thrown away our bookstaves, and, in adopting the inadequate Roman alphabet, call its symbols letters. The Icelanders, who are more conservative than we are, have retained the ancient Rune for *th*, our thorn, and they have further modified the Roman letters by the introduction of certain signs over the vowels, indicating those differences of pronunciation for which the Roman alphabet had no equivalent signs.

Besides the employment of Runes for sending messages, there is also the employment of these wonderful letters in monumental records and inscriptions to be noticed. All through Scandinavia, and in many parts of England, stones and *crosses* are found with Runic inscriptions. Some of these are written in what is called the secret Runic character, which consists in the whole series of Runes being modifications of one primitive Runic letter. The *Ís* Runes are repetitions only of the Rune *Ís*, the *Lagu*-Rune of *Lagu*, and so forth.

The ascription of magical powers to the Runes was an almost necessary consequence of the abstract ideas connected with them, and of the exalted veneration in which

they were held. Besides which, the priests and priestesses were in the habit of "carving" Runes on various solemn occasions, so that it became natural to connect the very word with the idea of mystery. When a man hated another, he would set up a post against him, on the summit of which was placed a horse's head, and on the post Runes were carved, indicating that the hated man was a "nithring" or coward. This is, of course, the primitive form of posting as a coward.

When a warrior found himself near death, without having the glory of being killed in battle—the normal mode of exit from this world of a bold soldier—he would spring from the summit of a huge rock into the sea, and thus die a violent death; or he would if debarred by age, sickness, or too great a distance from such a rock, carve the "spear point", or mystic name of Odin, on his breast, until he bled to death. Again, we find constant mention of the custom of carving or scratching Runes against sickness, and also to cause it in others; Runes were carved on drinking-horns, so as to prevent poisons from taking effect; on doors to thwart the spells of witches, and on swords to give the edge sharpness and the hilt strength. Thus the very idea of the Rune brought with it its twin brother, mystery. The abstract and the concrete were correlative. "To roun in the ear," still found in many parts of England, implies the making of a mysterious communication, or whispering.

Of old our warriors named their swords as we do our ships, and in heroic sagas we find them tenderly addressed by their rugged owners. Beowulf's sword was called "Hrunting." The terrible weapon wielded by the hero of

the Frithjoff's Saga was known as "Angurvardael." The blade before us bears the inscription of "Ægenkœra", meaning, as I think, "the dread inspirer," or "awe-driver." The Runes are very clearly carved, and look as though of recent date; but the comparative durability of the metal on which they are engraved, and the ease with which marks may be made therein, may perhaps explain the phenomenon.

Runes were held in horror by the Early Fathers of our Christianity, but were not so easily banished from the Saxon mind, which, indeed, is more conservative than any other. When mysterious properties are predicated of certain words and letters, occult thought lurking within, as the soul in the body, then the Rune is chosen even by the Christian scribe. Thus, in the life of Saint Juliana, the letters in the name Cynewulf are personified, and therefore mysteriously endowed with life. To heighten the effect of this magic process, Runes are used. And again, in the strange poem of *Solomon and Saturn*, preserved in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, there is a similar personification of each letter in the word "Paternoster",—these characters are first translated into Runes before being so dealt with, evidently on account of the mystic property of the ancient form.

The invention of these characters is ascribed to Odin himself, and they were supposed in an eminent degree to partake of divine attributes. Does not this transport the mind back to the cradle of mankind, mystery-breathing India, where the characters of the Vedic hymns, still used by the Brahmins, are called the "Devanagari"—"the letters of the gods"? And if speech be the gift of God and not

the invention of man, a truth fairly established by the great master Max Müller, how natural the conclusion that the fitting types and symbols of articulate intelligible sounds should be divine as well. But the abuse of these god-like letters, just as the abuse of the other great gift of speech, involved us all in ruin. So the Runes got into bad odour, laws were made against them, and monks were told never more to use the pagan signs, and Runic lore died out in England.

I have told you that the Runes were said to be of divine invention. The sword was not less so, for we read that the first sword was forged by the Vulcan of the North, himself a god, for the chief and mightiest of the deities, Odin. This smith-god was called Völund or Wayland, and he is not quite dead yet, for in many parts of England traces of veneration for a mysterious being called "Wayland Smith" have been discovered and preserved by Sir Walter Scott. The Scandinavian sword of Völundr is repeated in the illuminations in Anglo-Saxon MSS., enabling us thereby to identify this northern weapon with those now lying before us—a right noble lineage for the English sword, whose history extends back to Valhalla, whence it brings down Odin's own Runes; it crosses the sea to Britain, and gives rise to the most English form of sword worn all through the history of the island. The very fact of the character called Wayland Smith as a North-of-England myth, connects us immediately with the Vulcan of Valhalla, even as the Scald of old connected his hero with Odin.

This is history, inasmuch as it shows us whence we are descended; or, at least, is a link in the long chain of evidence which proves our Scandinavian descent.

The sword before us is the *Mæl* or *Hring Mæl*, so-called from its cutting the rings of the hauberk in twain, as the modern German "*Eisenhauer*" hews through the iron of the foe. A smaller weapon, called the "*Seax*", was worn in the belt, and used, like the dagger in *Hudibras*, for peace and war, for carving at table, or for stabbing the foe when his deadly grip was too near for longer weapons to avail. Its blade was curved, so that it could well penetrate a rent in the armour caused by the larger sword, and despatch the fallen foe, in whom life had not been extinct. The purposes thus served remind us of the "*Miserecorde*" of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The name is still used all through Scandinavia for scissors; and some pretend that so national had this short dagger become, that it gave its name to the confederation of Scandinavian Teutons who held sway throughout the North-West of Europe under the appellation of Saxons. This weapon is alluded to by Nennius in his account of the treacherous deed of Hengist, who, invited by the Britons to a peaceful feast after the death of Vortimir, brings his Saxons with him, each with his seax concealed under his garments. Awaiting the moment when the British chieftains were quite off their guard, he gave the signal for the onslaught in the memorable words, "*Nimeth ewre seaxes*," "*Take your seaxes*," and the whole assembly of Britons perished. Whatever historic value the anecdote as such may possess is of little moment to us. We learn by it that the short dagger could be worn under the dress so as not to be readily seen.

All persons who have paid attention to the interesting subject of ancient arms and armour must have become acquainted with the famous name of the late Sir Samuel

Rush Meyrick, whose gorgeous work, entitled a "Critical Inquiry into Antient (*sic*) Arms and Armour", has long been regarded as the highest authority, the last appeal on all points connected with defensive or offensive arms. But great as this authority undoubtedly is, there are cases when either enthusiasm in the cause, or a strong love of forming hypotheses, has led him astray, and one of these instances is so closely connected with our story of the sword that I feel bound to refer to it.

We are gravely told that, before the invention of chain-mail, the Saxons, Normans, and other Scandinavians wore armour made of rings sewn contiguously on cloth or elk-skin, in such a manner as that they should lie side by side on the under-lining, without overlapping or hiding each other, so as to present a uniform metal surface to the foe. We are then informed that, as the threads by which these rings were sewn on were very easily cut off by a sweep of the sword, the expedient was resorted to of sewing them on "edgewise", somewhat as a street-door knocker is fixed, *i.e.* with one side fastened and one side free, the free side of one ring covering the stitches of another, so as to present only metal to the edge of the sword, the appearance produced being that of innumerable copies of the letter S all over the surface. Finally, in consequence of this device not being a sufficient protection against the sweeping blow of the battle-sword, a new contrivance was introduced from the "*East*" in the fourteenth century, which was called *chain-mail*, and which could not be shorn of its rings, as was said to be the case with the other kind of armour. Meyrick then states, as a clincher, that the older form of sewn armour was technically called

ring-mail, or hring-mæl, by the Anglo-Saxons. This theory always made me feel uncomfortable as a boy; but when I commenced the study of Anglo-Saxon some twenty-five years ago, I discovered that Meyrick was not infallible; that the mæl of the Saxons was the weapon, not the armour—that it was the sword itself; while the ring in the compound expression was either due to the sword being ornamented with a gold ring, or else that it was of sufficient temper to cut through the chain. It now became a duty to hunt up all the Saxon authorities on the subject of the armour, and, commencing with *Beowulf*, I found in this poem alone, sufficient proofs that actual chain-armour, precisely like the Oriental specimens preserved in the British Museum, was worn by the earliest Scandinavian inhabitants of the North, certainly as far back as the fourth century, a thousand years before the invention of this kind of armour, as given authoritatively by Meyrick. The name for chain-armour among the Saxons was “byrnie”; the Scandinavians under Ruric introduced it into Russia in the ninth century (862), and the Russian name for chain-mail is “bronya”, another form of byrnie, to this very day. In no part of the world have I been able to trace the faintest proof of Meyrick’s theory of the existence of armour formed of rings sewn on some such stuff as cloth, elk-skin, or linen, as the fundament of a garment which they were to strengthen. Through Indian, Russian, Scandinavian, German, and French authorities, I have hunted unsuccessfully for some corroboration of the theory, but only to find it contradicted by facts. In the “*Lay of Beowulf*”, we find how the war-net is woven by the smith, how the “ring-byrnie” was hard “*hand-locked*” or riveted, how the iron

shirts sang as the warriors marched; how the rings and chains were twisted and woven, *but not as women weave*, till the war shirt rattles the song of Hilda (goddess of War) in the air. How the Nickars could not assail Beowulf in the water because of his byrnie, nor could the monsters of the deep tear him because of his "linked" mail. But there is no allusion in chronicle, saga, or lay to rings coming off, or having to be sewn on; so that I am reluctantly compelled to own that on this point Meyrick has allowed his love of hypothesis to carry him too far, while his knowledge of the tongue of our forefathers was too slight to justify him in the assertions he made. This is one of the many instances of the wrong done to us as English people, by being educated as though we were to be Greeks and Romans, and thus deprived of the legitimate means which we all ought to possess of becoming acquainted with our own history, our own people, and our own language.

We have now to consider the hilt or grip of this grand relic. And at the outset, again, we have pure English words to deal with. Hilt, or hylt, is the proper name of the gripping part of a Hring-mæl. Compare the guard and the ball (more recently called by the Norman word, pommel) with the Asiatic forms preserved in other parts of this collection, and you will be able to see that the object of the ball is to prevent the hilt from slipping through the hand of the warrior, while the lower hilt, or cross-guard, was chiefly useful to prevent the weapon from slipping through the hole in the armour, through which, in time of war, the naked blade was thrust. Later on this guard was increased in size, so as to become

a useful defence against a sliding blow gliding down the blade and cutting the hand. In the days when this sword before us was worn, blows were generally taken on the shield, which was wielded in one hand.

I have stated the reason for the cross-guard to be the prevention of the whole weapon falling through the hole in the byrnie, and this was certainly the chief motive for such an addition to the hilt proper. The pagan English had a mysterious reverence for the form of the cross long before their conversion to Christianity, and this weird veneration for a sign familiar to them as an expression of something occult seems to have prepared the way for a greater amount of awe in regarding what was received as a symbol of salvation by the Church; this, too, may have been the reason why the sword of the crusader formed a cross with the guard. In the Anglo-Saxon sword this guard was curved downwards, and projects too slightly from the blade to be any protection from a sliding cut gliding downwards.

The grip, or hilt, was of wood, bound round with leather, and profusely ornamented with gold. In some of the swords in the national collection the gold is as bright and clear as though it had been added yesterday. The ring is a very long oval when found; and although we are told, in every possible saga, that gold rings were the reward of merit all round, being granted to warrior, sword, ship, and shield, I am still inclined to believe that the term *Hring-Mæl* was not derived from this form of ornament, but from the object intended to be cut. It is true that I have against me the expression *Hring Stæfen*, or ring stem, denoting a ship whose prow, in consideration of gallant

conduct on the deep, had been rewarded by the glittering gift of pure gold rings right royally bestowed. If Hringstæfen meant ring pranked prow, why should not Hring Mæl mean the trusty steel whose conduct had won him this distinction? Be this as it may, from whichever thought the sword was called Hring Mæl, remember that it was the sword and not the armour thus referred to.

There are remnants of the wearer's love for this most dearly cherished of his worldly goods in the fine gold adornments of the sword-hilt, shown in one of these cases still clinging to it, like our own better feelings expressed in such shining words as wife, mother, love, truth, heaven, goodness, manhood, and the like, clinging to the Saxon heart that beats within our English breast. A great master of Art has told us, without thinking of these golden gauds granted by our forefathers to the good swords they loved so well, that:—"When we make anything useful thoroughly, it is a law of nature that we shall be pleased with ourselves, and with the thing we have made; and become desirous therefore to adorn or complete it in some dainty way, with finer art expressive of our pleasure." True to this axiom, our forefathers decked their swords in pride or pleasure, proud of themselves and their weapons, and pleased with the grand success of both; and here they are telling to our Saxon hearts our own loved story of the past. Shall they not awaken pride and pleasure in us direct descendants of the owners?

Akin to the feeling known to every midshipman or ensign who first girds on the battle sword, was the reverence of our fathers for this weapon. They saw in its different forms various expressions of Divine might—a

thought not unworthy of Christian writings, in one of the most wonderful of which a sword is seen issuing from the mouth of one whose function is to represent to us all that we are able to conceive of Deity. The very word *sweorð* (German, *schwerdt*; Scandinavian, *svärd*), is full of wonderful hidden teachings, and to comprehend a little of the great hoard of meaning contained in that one syllable would require considerable research into tales and sagas of a *very* far back past. The root *swer* brings us farther and farther into the gulph of time, and shows us the sense of shining, gleaming, flashing, and, more remotely, *heaven*, which in the grand old speech of the far East is called the *Swerga*. To vow to heaven, then, was to swear; Swedish *sverja*; English, *swerian*; German, *schwören*. Now the thing that bound a king to his God, an earl to his king, and a vassal to his earl, was the symbol of power, of truth combative, of protection and of glory, all which attributes reside together in the sword alone. Hence the very name is cognate with the root expressive of the brightest hope of human life, and so with death and brighter life beyond the tomb. "He sweareth" means "he takes his sword and vows to heaven a solemn oath upon it."

Let us place ourselves in the position of the grand men who drew this sword for us, and think of them as without the light of Christianity. The dearest and most solemn gift we Christians have is the Word of God, coming, as a *sword* is described in the Revelations as doing, out of His mouth who made us. Well, when a judge seeks to obtain the truth from men whom he must question, he binds them to the truth by an oath on what the community to which he belongs holds most sacred. This is

the Bible in our day; but when there was no Bible for the men who had to swear, what could be taken as the most solemn thing they knew? The sword!

When two warriors formed the bond of brotherhood, they cut each a rune in his own left arm, and then applied the mystic figure to the corresponding arm of the friend. The two left arms were bound together for a short time, the two swords were planted (point downwards) upright in the ground between them, and over the swords the right hand of each grasped the right hand of the other, and in the old speech of Scandinavia preserved in Iceland, but living also with us, they cried, "Ver svörjum Bruderskaft"—"We swear brothership," or, "We *sword* it brothership." When a king received the fealty of any minor leader, Yarl, or Thane, or Cnight—earl, baron, or knight—the sword was the medium of the oath. "The king he sat on high-bank, and before him knelt the Yarl," between them stood the war sword with its hilt towards the sky. Between the king's two hands the knight then placed his own right hand, and this was done in such a way that they should cross the hilt of that good sword before them. The knight would vow upon that sword to serve the king right well by day and night, on field, on wave, at ting, at board, in peace, in war, in life or death. So help him, Thor and Odin, likewise his own good sword.

Our own beloved Shakespeare knew probably little of this custom, but he might have heard or seen an anecdote connected with it while preparing the most abstract, the most philosophical, and perhaps the most English of all his dazzling glories. Hamlet, true to the Scandinavian feeling of the time in which he lived, swears the two

soldiers, Horatio and Marcellus, on his sword. Even after their solemn promise of secrecy as to what had happened, which they deem, in their soldier sense of honour, already a binding oath, Hamlet says, "Upon my sword." Marcellus retorts, "We have sworn, my lord, already." Hamlet insists, "*Indeed*, upon my sword, *indeed*", where "*indeed*" means in actual outer form of oath, as act and deed; and the invisible spirit of his father echoes from beneath them, "*Swear*."

Connected with "sword" is "word", for we say "upon my word"; and in the Christian oath the Word of God has taken the place of the sword of man. But there is an ancient Sanskrit root *swar*, which denotes the "sound which has a meaning". Hence in the Scandinavian forms of speech, to which our own belongs, we get "svar" as that sound which is fraught with meaning—an *answer*. In this very word "answer" we have the same root; "*and*" being equivalent to *against*, or towards; thus "reply" is delightfully expressed by the word "and-swer", or the meaning sound or word which is sent back again. We, having lost our keen susceptibility to the power of our own roots through false education in a foreign idiom, often say, "I returned him answer," knowing not that the sense of returning lies in the prefix "ant"—contracted into "an" in answer. The "w" is elided in pronunciation, but is there in fact, guarding a root cognate with *swer*, to shine, but meaning to *sound*. These two roots are so alike and so near each other that they have become intermixed, so that some people of our race say "swar" for answer, and "sword" for sword; others have a broader sound in sword, modified into "swärd" for the gleaming weapon. Now whether, as

some say, sword is of the root "swer", as being the gift of God, or as others have it, the "word" itself, we can see the meeting of both in this god-like gift, and recognise in *sword* the type of a sounding flash: so intimate are the two attributes of our weapon, that we may be excused for regarding them as homogeneous, as they are simultaneous. For who can tell, who draws his sword, whether sound or flash has the right of primogeniture as the gleaming blade leaps into light and rings, as it leaves the scabbard, a hurrah that nerves the hand and rejoices the heart of him whose privilege it is to be wedded to the "warrior's iron bride"?

No wonder, then, that the early Scandinavian Englishman almost worshipped his sword. No wonder that it was solemnly given him over a burning fire in mid-hall by the lady of the chief in whose service the blade should be bared. Presented in so elegant, so refined a way, by the fair hand of deified woman (for we worshipped women then as being nearer heaven than we), it is no wonder that the sword was the property of the hero until death—and even beyond the tomb; for it was laid in his grave mound with him when he—(to use the beautiful expression for death in war, generally employed by the poets of those days)—was "laid asleep by the sword." The weapons in the various cases before us are all taken from the graves of warriors, and great were the supernatural terrors guarding the rest of the sleeper. Few instances are on record of the desecration of a grave by a Saxon warrior. In these instances, the sword has invariably been the object of the sacrilegious attack on the peace of the dead. Some wonderful deed done in the lifetime of the departed

hero enshrined his sword among the great names guarded by Fame. Thus there is a story of a huge warrior named Angantyr, who had performed wonderful feats with his blade, called "*Tirfing*." He was a viking, and was interred with his ship and arms and armour ready for instant action. Well, the story goes that some hundred years after the death of Angantyr, another hero, desirous of possessing such a sword as Tirfing, persuaded a sorceress (quite a lady, by-the-bye, not a modern witch) to chant a Runic lay of magic power sufficient to open the mound and reveal to him all its mysterious horrors. He came out with the sword, rushed past the enchantress, and flung himself into the adventure for which he had required the ancient weapon. He was successful, he achieved the adventure, but lost the sword, his reason, and the power of speech in the same moment. None ever knew the secrets of that grave, but before the maniac died, in a lucid interval he is said to have alluded to them by carving in Runes the word "horror". After which the Berserk madness seized him, he rushed into the thick of battle, where he "foremost fighting fell".

Within this wealth-hoard of English lore, which I am reluctantly compelled to call the British Museum, there are still carefully preserved chronicles, sagas, and lays of incalculable worth to us. The handwork of olden writers may be seen telling the stories of our sires in the same way, although with a different tongue from the mute historians in these glass cases. Among them is the epic of "*Beowulf*", the most ancient of all Teutonic poetic remains. In this poem are found the germs of what we meet with in later German romance, in Scandinavian

sagas, and in Norman lays. A hero comes to Britain to free a certain king from the tyranny of a monster. The hero is described with the quiet everyday composure of a writer describing objects familiar to him, and yet with an amount of enthusiasm only to be accounted for by his intense conviction of the reality of what he describes. The MS. in the British Museum is of the ninth, or beginning of the tenth century, but the original story is of the fourth or fifth. This "new edition", if I may use the expression, has been christianized by the substitution of the word "the Lord" for the names of any Odinic deity; and this is, practically speaking, nearly all that has been done to change it, for with these exceptions the whole poem is as pagan as we were two thousand years ago.

In accordance with the custom of the time, the sword of the hero is *named*, and the name is brought down to us as Hrunting (probably from the Scandinavian *hrynja*, "to destroy with din"). A better sword need no man have, and yet in fight with the monster it was useless; his skin blunted the edge, which made no impression on him. So the hero threw aside the good sword, and threw away his armour, fighting the Grendel with his undefended hands. By these means, however, he was enabled to fight more freely, and he tore the right arm from the monster's shoulder, who, howling, fled to the dreary fen whence he had come, leaving the Hall of the Hart, as the dwelling of the king is called, in peace. Not satisfied with this victory, Beowulf pursues his foe to the fen and finds the dreary lake in which he dwells. He plunges in, armed in mail, with Hrunting in his hand. A whole day does he consume in his descent through the water. At last he reaches

the cavern where the dying Grendel lies. The monster's mother, a more grisly horror than the son, flies at the hero, who plunges his sword into her body, and finds the blade melted by contact with her unearthly blood. But there is in a corner of the cave an old *etonish*, or giant sword, with Runes engraven on it. He seizes the sword and succeeds in slaying the monster at a blow. He then *dives upwards* with the uncanny blade, which, however, he preserves. The last act of this devoted hero is to attack a dragon who watches over a hoard of gold, like Fafner in the Scandinavian myth and the Dragon in the Niebelungen-Lied, both of which are much later than our Beowulf. The hall which he frees from the Grendel is called the Hall of the Hart; the pool of the Grendel is known to many of my hearers as Hartlepool; and the family of Beowulf were the Scyldings, whose patronymic shall live on in "*Shields*" for ever.

The power of the sword in poetry is seen at every turn; but its great might for good or ill is seldom taught in history, because historians have hitherto been ignorant of what the potence means, of which the concrete weapon is but a type and symbol.

In our own translation of the Word of God we are led to see a higher meaning dwelling, as it were, within and yet beyond the letter. Somewhat of this clothing of interior mysteries with the external husk of fact—being to truth really what the husk is to the corn, the body to the soul—something, I say, of this mysterious connection between the seeming world of lifeless fact and the true world of undying spirit, underlies *all* ancient teachings; and on the system of this connection the inspired writers

were enabled to build. We may be sure that something dearer to our souls than mere metal is meant when we are counselled to buy gold, to sell our garments, and buy swords; and in a similar way we may regard mythology as an external shell containing the dead religion of our fathers. As lovely urns may enclose their dearer ashes, so does the myth that tells of the swords of the hero-gods of high Valhalla contain inurned some precious remains of truth preserved throughout all time.

The sword in art has not been sufficiently utilised as a means of decoration. In the Anglo-Saxon Hall the group behind the warrior's seat, consisting of his helmet, byrnie, spear, javelin, sword, and shield, was arranged in the most artistic way. And even if they had not been arranged with skill and foresight, it is a remarkable fact that however arms may be flung together, an agreeable group is produced. This fact was pointed out to me by the late Mr. Robert Porrett, when storekeeper at the Tower. I was as a boy engaged in the study of arms and armour, and was allowed to be present at their arrangement in the Armoury, and I remember being shown how new forms in decorating the walls and ceilings could be produced, as it were haphazard, by flinging sword-blades into all possible combinations. I was astonished to find that they always fell into groups pleasing to the eye. So in *Beowulf*, the grouping of the spear, the linden wood, and battle blade, produces joyful effects to the warrior's gaze. I should be glad to see the hint carried out more fully in architecture, where naked columns and arches might be agreeably clothed, the one with the shaft of the spear, the other with the round disc of the shield. No more glorious

centre for a ceiling could be devised than a Saxon shield, with such blades as those before us radiating as beams from the sun.

The sword in mythology is a type of Divine truth combative, defending, guarding, and keeping the higher element, love, from harm. When this work is done, when evil is conquered and falsehood overthrown, then the never weary blade must be beaten into a ploughshare to provide that nourishment without which the guarded one would faint. But it is the same true steel that guards us from external falsity, and gives us eternal bread. Let us not be called profane, if we trace a similar sublimity in our own mythology, which being deprived of inner life lies, as it were, in ashes, just bearing the same relation to the inspired Word that the dust in a sarcophagus bears to the living man.

Let it be granted that the sword is truth combative, and we shall be led to further highly interesting facts.

There are twelve gods in Valhalla, because the number twelve signifies, according to the German system, what is complete. These gods are but the personified attributes of One All-Father, the One God Odin, whose name, composed of two syllables, denotes the peerless *One*, for the first syllable "odd" means, that which is without a fellow, *i.e.*, peerless. "*En*" is one, "an" or the numeral, also written "one"; hence the very name implies the peerless *One*. His twelve compeers or sons are but his attributes.

Tyr is the adolescent stage of man, or the Deity manifested, a guide to the holy one Odin, and he is armed with a small curved sword or seax, and a lance. His sword is combative, but weak compared with the mighty war-

sword of the All-wise Odin, whose sweeping blade smoothes the way onwards to maturity, perfection, but not yet to peace. And these stages in the progress of the warrior are signified by the succession of our seven days, of which the centre figure is that devoted to the culminating state of pure ripe manhood. In this state, as the ancient hymn called the "*Volüspá*" relates, a fell giantess arises called the Love of Gold. She must be quelled, and this is the first war. This myth speaks for itself. The Sword of Wisdom is bared, and the Love of Gold is subdued. But other evils rise, and must be combated by the descent of Deity—a truth contained either prophetically or reflectively in all mythology all through the world. Thor, as the descending power of the Almighty, descends in thunder, whence the name of his day. His sword is huge and sharp, but only of one edge, while that of Odin has two. Thor's favourite weapon is a mighty mallet, wherewith the sensual principles of man, represented by giants or eaters (as the true name implies), must be crushed. Frey, as the god of Love, has but an emblem-sword, two feet in length, to show that when love is established in man's heart, after subduing his sensual principle, truth must indeed be there to guard the sacred fire, but it is hardly truth combative any more. The sword of Satur (whence our Saturday) is a burning flame, by which heaven and earth shall be consumed, to be replaced by a new heaven and a new earth that shall never pass away.

I want to show you that in regarding this poor dead piece of blackened iron, we may see rise up from these ashes a grand story of our own English mind. I am not going to tell you how the sword was subsequently modified

in form, and lead you from the sword of Hengist to the sabre of our own dragoons. Such a dissertation I will give you, if you wish it, on some other occasion. It might be interesting, but it would not be history.

I mentioned that Thor, besides his sword, was armed with a crushing mallet, called by mortals the thunderbolt; but he, unlike Odin, wore his sword in a belt. This belt was the source of his resistless strength, and when he tightened it round his waist and put on his wondrous gauntlet before he hurled his hammer at the foul giants whom he had to overthrow, his strength was resistless. There are countless myths of Thor, telling what he did to the Jotuns, or eaters, or giants of old; but my ardour in the cause must not lead me too far, and with this belt I must close my story.

The idea of a belt of might, like the invisible cloak of Jack the Giant killer (who is a nursery form of Thor), is not unfamiliar to us. Orion's belt, the cestus of Venus, and many girdle myths are known to you all; but the belt of Thor is perhaps less so than any, for the simple reason that you ought to know all about it. The name of this belt is, like most names in our mythology, most significant. It is *meginngjardir*, "the might girdle". In the word *megin*, you have the English *may*, the guttural element which we have lost in our pronunciation of "might" being present in the "g", which, however, becomes "y" in this instance. We see the common origin of the two words, might and main, in this one. "*Gjardir*", is the girth, or girdle, or girt, of our own time. The grandest idea connected with this belt of might is that it implies the outer world or jord, our earth, which is the "*Girdle of Divinity*."

Rich with every kind of precious stone this girdle was no mean emblem of the wealth of earth; and when a mighty warrior was received as a worthy thane, he was girt with a golden girdle, *i.e.*, there was much of this world's wealth in his external splendour, for power and wealth go together. The precious stones, the golden clasp, the carved and molten images that gemmed a Scandinavian waist showed that he was bold and rich—in Icelandic *báld* and *rik*. Hence baldrick became the appropriate name of this northern sign of knightly dignity.

Attached to the baldrick was a sort of sling of leather, through which the sword could pass when armour was not worn; but this was rather for state than ordinary wear. Generally, the sword hung through the aperture in the byrnie, or depended from the wall behind the seat of the warrior in winter. At a later period the sheath or scabbard was introduced, though this was known before the conquest of Britain. When the sheath was worn it was sometimes, but not always, affixed to the baldrick, which was rather a sign of distinction than a sword-belt. It continued to be so down to the end of the fifteenth century; and the ceremony of girding a knight is a remnant of that dear old time when all things, to the English eye, had a meaning that spoke to the English heart.

LECTURE II.

THE SHIELD.

THE object of greatest importance to our grim forefathers, who cleared the way by war for us to inhabit this island in peace, was, as I have endeavoured to show in my first lecture, the sword. Next to the sword, in the order of its use to the Scandinavian warrior, was his shield; and of the care taken to adorn this treasured piece of armour we have ample proofs in the interesting specimens now presented to your notice in this precious collection.

But it may be objected that among the objects here displayed there is no shield to be seen whatever. This is perfectly true; and yet we have here all the imperishable portion of the arm that could come down to us. These elegant forms are specimens of the boss of the ancient Scandinavian-English shield, as borne by our ancestors before their conquests of Britain, and for some centuries after it.

The reason why the boss alone has been preserved to us is because the body of the shield, being made of the wood of the linden, was soon eaten away by the ever-whetted tooth of time, leaving no remains of the brave man's buckler beyond these fragments taken from his grave. And yet we can, helped out by the unerring aid of language, call up before the mind's eye the true shape of

our fathers' favoured bulwark, although it has never met our actual gaze.

The form of the ancient English shield was generally circular, the boss forming the centre. It was concave, so as to cover the breast and shoulder well; the convex surface, turned towards the enemy, was adapted to ward off a blow from a sword, or to deflect an arrow or javelin. The woodwork, made of the light linden, was so constructed as to leave an aperture for the hand in the centre, and over this aperture came the boss guarding the hand, as the basket guards the hand in single stick. Across the aperture a small bar was fastened, which served as a handle by which to hold the shield in fight. Within, the shield was lined with some finer fabric, as cloth or leather; while the outside was further protected by the skin of a bear, wolf, deer, or any other beast of the chase. The hide was worn with the rough hairs outside, and was firmly fixed to the linden board by nails and studs, bordered by a rim of gilt leather, bronze, or gold, passing round the circumference.

Strutt and Meyrick give another shape of shield, a sort of scroll forming a kind of fluted crescent. But I am not aware of any remains which prove its actual existence. I am inclined to attribute it rather to the play of the fancy of the illuminator of the MS. than to his accuracy in representing what he saw. It is only found bordering manuscripts. I have never seen a representation of such a crescent-scroll shield actually worn.

All through the North, the linden wood furnished the body and base of this needful arm; and the praises of the tree are sounded all through the whole series of sagas and

lays which have lived on to our time, but in none are the virtues of the linden more thoroughly insisted on than in early English (otherwise Anglo-Saxon) poetry and prose. In *Beowulf*, the earliest Teutonic poem, the grand epic of the North, written in English and preserved in our treasure-hoard, the British Museum,—the shield is perpetually referred to as the linden; the serried ranks of warriors are called the linden forest. When the hardy champions arrive at the court of King Hróthgár, they place their shields leaning against a wall, and the form of the buckler is clearly pointed out in the lines:—“*Setton sæ méthe side scyldas, rondas regnhearde, with thæs recedes weal.*” “They set then, those sea-worn-ones, their wide war shields down; right hard were those round shields by the hall’s mighty wall.” In this passage, the word “*rondas*” does not mean that the special form of those particular shields was round, but that the adjective “*rond*”, used substantively, is a fitting name for the shield with which it stands in apposition, much as we might employ the adjective brave as a substantive referring to a hero. There seems, in fact, no trace throughout Scandinavia of any other form for the hand-borne buckler. In the Frithioff saga a pleasing simile is made, when two king’s sons are united in friendship with a powerful land-owner and warrior, who is to be their stay in peace and ally in war. The passage is as follows, rendered into English:—

“For strength with kingly glory, when love hath bound it,
Is like a golden war shield with a steel band round it.”

That the normal material for the shield was the wood of the linden tree is manifest from *Beowulf*, where it is

said, in lines 4660 to 4670 of Thorpe's edition (page 151):—

“Him thæs gúth-cyning
 Wedera theóden,
 wræce leornode :
 héht him thá gewyrcean
 wígendera hleo.
 eall irenne,
 eorla dryhten,
 wig-bord wrætlic ;
 wisse he gearwe
 that him holt-wudu
 helpan ne meahte,
 linden with lige.”

“For him the warrior king,
 Prince of the Wederas,
 learned in vengeance,
 bade for him be wrought
 the protector of warriors,
 all of iron,
 for that lord of earls
 a war-board curiously wrought ;
 he well knew
 that then no forest wood
 might aught avail him,
 linden 'gainst fire !”

It is worthy of remark that so customary was the use of the appellation *board* for the shield, that even in this abnormal instance of its being made of iron, the same expression is employed, not only by the saga-man, but by Beowulf himself, who, further on (line 5040, page 170) alludes to his iron shield and armour as “*bord and byrnie*”. In fact the four chief names for the shield used in the poem alone are sufficient for us to deduce from thence its shape, use, and material. They are *rond*, *scyld*, *bord*, and *lind* ; round, protector, board, and wood of the linden tree. These words are all Scandinavian, and are used in sagas throughout the whole of the North. *Skiöld*, in Icelandic, implies “protector”, and *skiöldung* is equivalent to “king”, meaning he who shields or protects. This is the reason of the patronymic of Beowulf's family, the Scyldings, which is still perpetuated in the names of North and South Shields.

The chief strength of this defence lay in the boss. From this metallic centre the woodwork seems to spring,

forming a convex disc. To give greater strength to this portion of the arm, concentric rings were said to have been nailed on the outside, over the bull's hide or bearskin, which formed the outer covering, and which they helped to fasten down. The extreme edge of the shield was of iron, bronze, or even gold; though I am inclined to think that these rings were only painted or gilt, as in the modern target, according to the wealth or rank of the wearer, and perhaps according to the estimation in which the shield was held by him, who may have owed his life on many occasions to its protection. As the nasal helmet and ear-guards hid the warrior's face from the sight of his friends and foes, it became necessary to adopt some sign by which he could be recognised. Accordingly, the shield was marked in some way to render him more conspicuous. The young untried soldier wore a white shield, and Tacitus remarks on the immense preponderance of the white shields, among the Germans, over those bearing some colour or distinguishing mark. Doubtless the colours of the furs of certain animals were received as a distinction. There are laws still extant against the use of sheepskin as a cover to the buckler, and the white colour has direct reference to the moon's disc, the moon-god being the patron of the youthful or adolescent warrior. Various leaders would adopt the portraiture of different animals, boldly cut in bronze or some other metal, but that they were nailed on the shields, and borne before them by the armour-bearers is hypothesis. We know that such distinctive badge was borne as a leader's "token" (German, *Zeichen*), and consisted of such sign or emblem cut in metal, mounted on a shaft like

a spear, and so carried. In this way Alfred's jewel, to which I shall refer in another lecture, was borne before the king in fight.

The white colour of the shield was, in all probability, due to the skin of the animal being applied to the linden with the fur inside, and the leather or skin bleached, as may be seen in parts of Russia where the peasants wear a sheep skin with the wool inside and the white leather exposed. The decorated shield with the gilt boss in the centre lives among us in the target of the toxophilite, and the archer who strikes the bull's-eye does what his ancestors did two thousand years ago in Angeln. This target preserves the concentric rings on a white ground, as we might have been led to expect. The word itself comes from the Old High German *Zarge*, meaning "a frame", a side, or a wall, and in this latter sense it was applied to the shield. It was borrowed by the Franks, who made it into *targue*, and the Normans made a diminutive of it in the word *targuette*, the English "target."

If we compare the shape of the Saxon shield with that of the target of the Scottish Highlander, we see at once whence the Gælic form was borrowed. There is no trace of any special form of shield borne by the Kelt save that which was a direct copy of Scandinavian or Roman models. As the claymore is a copy of the sword before us, so is the target a copy of the shield. The proof of priority lies in the fact of these arms being found in Scandinavian tumuli of a date antecedent to all traces of the Kelt. The description of the arms of a clansman at the end of the seventeenth century, as given by Scott, would apply to those of a Scandinavian Englishman of the third, or fourth.

“There is brass in the target of barked bull’s hide,
There is steel in the broadsword that hangs by the side,
The brass shall be burnished, the steel shall flash free,
Ere low lie the bonnets of bonnie Dundee.”

It may be observed that the chief charm of this spirited ringing verse lies in the alliteration, so that Scott has, as it were unconsciously, furnished us, in describing Gaels, a delightful piece of Saxon word-painting, true all through.

In the use of the shield the Saxons were, like other Scandinavians, most dexterous. Holding by the cross-piece at the base of the boss, they either held their shields full in front of them, or raised them on high so as to form a roof of scales—proof against all the arrows and javelins that could be showered upon them. This reminds us of the testudo of the Romans, though distinct from it in certain particulars. First, the Roman scutum, being in the form of a parallelogram bent into the section of a cylinder, was better calculated to overlap and fit into the shield of another soldier than the round and slightly conical disc of the northern arm. Secondly, the Romans used two straps in the concave interior, through one of which the arm passed while the hand grasped the other. So firm was the hold thus obtained by the bearers that occasionally mounted officers in full panoply would ride over the testudo to show how firmly it was compacted. This could hardly have been done with the Scandinavian formation. The Roman scutum was much heavier than our shield, which was constructed for light work in warding off arrows and javelins rather than for the rampart-like solidity of the Roman column. Still, however, the Saxon shield was used in a very similar way when the

wedge was formed, the two sides of which opposing the enemy were well defended by the rampart of bucklers opposed to the foe; and there is a drawing in the first volume of Strutt's "*Horda Angel-cynnan*, or a Compleat View of the Manners, Customs, Arms, Habits, etc., of the Inhabitants of England", representing the inside of a large shield, with fragments of attachments for such straps as were used by the Romans.

The compact wedge, with the thin end towards the enemy, was the favourite formation among all the Teutons, and had not the *ruse* of William the Norman succeeded in drawing the English out of it, there would have been no Battle Abbey at Pevensey.

For resisting attacks there is no formation like the wedge, opposing as it does the least possible surface to the enemy, and for attacking of an enemy in column, it is the surest and deadliest mode of breaking him up. As an iron wedge forces its way into a solid block of wood, or stone, so the Scandinavian wedge forced its way into the column of the foe; but when once inserted, the irresistible pressure urged on the living mass to penetrate the enemy's ranks, and when far enough in, the word was given to expand into line. Immediately the two sides opened up, sweeping all before them, until the two extreme ends, which had joined the base of the wedge, lay in one line with the apex, and the reserves filling the inner mass of the wedge, now formed in their turn a shallow column as they marched over the corpses of the slain, the terrible hillebard, or *Hilda's-barde*, mowing down all before it. The double axe was often employed on this occasion by the foremost warriors, the next in order flung their unerring

javelins, and those more in the centre showered their arrows "over rond-hreoda", so that no one could complain of lack of employment in the grim play of *Hilda*! For the reception of an attack, the longer battle spear and the grim bill formed the front behind the troop shield, and from behind them came the flight of the war-flakes, or arrows, whizzing through the air. Such a massive formation was the Scandinavian ancestor of the English square that defied the chivalry of France not quite seventy years ago at Waterloo.

But to return to the shield. We find among the uses to which it was put that of saving the warrior in a sea-fight. Its convex form and extreme lightness permitted of its floating with great buoyancy, so that in case of the dragon-ship being wrecked or sunk in action, the warrior could leap overboard, and, supported by the boat-like shield held floating before him, swim, even in his byrnie, for a considerable distance. At his death the shield was laid on his breast, and there we generally find the boss such as we see preserved in the British Museum. The coat of mail was too expensive and too useful to be disposed of so unproductively, and was generally left by will to the son or next of kin of the warrior. Thus we read in *Beowulf* that before his death, after giving particular directions concerning his funeral obsequies, the hero "doffed from his neck a golden ring; to his thane he gave it, his gold helmet of many hues, his ring, and his byrnie, and bade him use them well, saying, 'Thou art the last remnant of our kin of the Wægmundings, all of my kinsmen have been swept away by destiny. I shall follow them.'" Again, the fate of Ongantheow is

mentioned, after whose death his coat of mail and sword are taken from him, his other gear being left for his burial.

It has been suggested that the marks or badges worn on the shield were the direct parents of the elegant and recondite science of heraldry, and there seems to be some foundation for this theory, inasmuch as the use of metals, furs, and colours in heraldry admits thus of more complete explanation than can otherwise be offered. We have the Roman historian of the Teutons, Tacitus, distinctly asserting that the Goths had more white shields in their army than such as bore ornaments. The earlier Scandinavian traditions refer to white shields for untried soldiers; while we learn that the circumscribing ring on the king's buckler was of gold. This is heraldry as far as it goes; but it does not warrant the assumption that the minor decorations of "the field", called in modern heraldry "charges", were known to the Anglo-Saxons. Nor have I yet seen any early MS. with any drawings of shields which would lead us to suppose that any ornament beyond the exterior ring, and occasionally a piece of metal coming from the boss to the circumference, was ever used to identify the shield with its wearer. The warrior's place in the early Anglo-Saxon hall was indicated by his shield, helmet, sword, and byrnie hung up on the wall immediately behind the owner when seated at the board, and above him when sleeping. The names bestowed on the leaders were generally descriptive of some quality of the men they distinguished, or connected with some circumstance in their lives, and this is verbal heraldry. They bore standards or "tokens", as they were called,

which were carried before them in fight, but the inferior warriors were content with a less pretentious mode of identification, and the advocates of early heraldry say that this would naturally find its best place on the shield. Stars in gold, silver, or bronze; rings of these metals; crosses, and other similar devices of sufficient size to be recognised at a little distance, and yet small enough to be inserted between the outer ring and the boss, would be the proper and most probable way of rendering the warrior conspicuous, and of identifying the shield with the owner. And this would explain why in the later heraldry metals are never borne on metals but on colours or furs. Another very strong argument in favour of the decoration of the shield as identifying the wearer, is that, in consequence of the helmet being of leather, gilt and bound with iron or bronze, like the helmet of the Prussian soldier of to-day, the support for a distinctive crest, such as could easily be added to a metal helmet, was wanting, because the framework below, although capable of resisting a sword blow, or deflecting an arrow, was not adapted to support the superincumbent weight of the crest of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; but just as the Anglo-Saxons missed the crest, although the chiefs wore eagles' wings while in their pagan state, so they failed to employ the smaller signs on the shield, although they had colour, fur, and ring border.

The viking ship was a long canoe-like barge, with a curiously shaped deck beneath, which were the accommodations for the women and horses. The warriors themselves thought it shame to sleep below; so, as in hall, each had his place on deck by his oar and shield. The largest ship

carried thirty-two oars, sixteen of a side; above the aperture for the oar, and outside the ship, was hung the shield of each member of the band, the Viking himself held the steer-oar or rudder, which was fixed to the right hand side of the stern, which latter word, by the bye, is only a contraction of the verb *steoran*, to steer, *i.e.* the place of steering. I have already told you that the most general name for the shield was *bord* (board), as meaning a wooden defence; accordingly, the part of the ship fitted for protection by the addition to its strength of the shields of the warriors became known as the board *par excellence*. There are, of course, two sides to a ship, termed in modern nautical parlance starboard and port. The former of these denotes the side, or shielded part, to which the steering instrument is affixed. The old name for the port side was *larboard*, "lower" side, or "lurking" side, as being farthest from the enemy; but the original English-Saxon word was *back-board*, or that to which the steering side was, as it were, the front. In German and Swedish nautics, this word is current at the present day. The whole of that part of the bulwark to which shields were affixed was the board; hence our expressions "overboard", "aboveboard", "inboard", etc., which expressions have no reference whatever to the deck planks, but only to a part of the side. To "board" a ship is merely to get over the gunwale and thus pass over the side, as also in the phrase "falling overboard", where nothing more is implied than that the gunwale has been crossed outwardly. Thus we see that the very *termina technica*, so dear to us as a nautical power, are remnants of the dear old speech of our forefathers, and show us as Englishmen that our real shield against foreign foes must be sought

either in the honoured hall where some remains of that old speech still linger, or on board that structure which gave us this fertile island.

Undoubtedly the custom of hanging the shield in hall was the remote origin of the position of the escutcheons in the House of Lords, showing the place originally intended for the occupant. It is seen, though in a somewhat different form, in the Knights' Hall at Riga, where the columns and arches and roof are covered with shields of arms belonging to the Teutonic knights who long held sway in the Province of Courland, in the old Swedish times, in the German day, and even now under the modern rule of the Tsar.

But when the grand element of Teutonic thought—Freedom—had to be uttered, then no roof should stand between the free Teuton Englishman, Goth, Dane, or German, and his God. The public meeting was in the open air—an emblem^a of the freedom of public thought. The sword was worn, not naked in the byrnie, but sheathed in a linden scabbard and worn in a belt. The byrnie was left at home. Bows, arrows, spears, and javelins were banished from the meeting; but the sword, as emblematical of Truth combative, was there; so was the shield, so was the metal-bound cap, called helm or helin hat, meaning the guard and chief protector. The bronze boss was burnished, the steel was made bright, and round the glittering helmet the golden rings shone that told in their splendour of the splendid birth of the wearer. A simple gold circlet indicated the jarl, while the konung or kynning, our king, was known by triangular pieces of gold fixed on the ring, so as to form a sort of coronet of the

kind known as invected. The ring round the helmet of the thane was similar to that of the jarl, but not so broad. The place chosen for such a meeting was sometimes the grave mound of a celebrated warrior, which was itself quite a respectable hill. On the top of this hill the king took his stand. Around him in a ring stood, shield by shield, his jarls and thanes: a little lower was the freeholder, whose wealth and valour gave him a voice in the state, but who was not of noble blood. These wore the leathern helmet with no adornment but the steel ring which encircled the brow and supported the two half rings forming the skeleton, as it were, of the helmet. One of these was continued down over the nose, and formed a protection for the face in battle. At other times, when the stor-thing or folk-gemot was held, the place of meeting was a temple to Odin, built of upright, massy stones, and brought thither by main strength—the noblest offering such stalwart champions could bring. And, true to Scandinavian feeling, there was no roof. The centre was the tingsten, or doom-stone of the English, and was formed of three blocks of granite, placed so that two should be upright, or nearly so, the third forming a flat table, on which a victim could be sacrificed, or the king take his stand. On the inferior slabs stood the giant jarls and thanes, while the free yeomen and wealthy land-owners stood in the inner space between the outer circle of stones and the doom-stone of the king. Such monuments are found all over Scandinavia; and in our own Stonehenge—the stones or house of punishment—we have a magnificent relic of early English architecture of the Pagan times immediately after the arrival of Hengist and Horsa. It

is true that the rude form of such rock temple was hardly in keeping with the fine and delicate workmanship of many other remains; but we must remember that it was traditional, like our own woolsack, which was provided for one whose duty led him to assume a seat on such a slab of stone, and for whose comfort and health the luxury of a sack of wool was provided.

Having seen our king, earls, and commons, not forgetting the Lord Chancellor himself, foreshadowed in Anglo-Saxon times and brought to us in these precious relics of the past, let us look a little into the use of the sword and shield in the great meetings of the free and brave. Arms were forbidden; but the sword, as we have seen, was there in its scabbard, like the latent force that lies unseen in every great meeting, even now. And the shield was there; and why? Because, being highly poetical and greatly given to emblematical language, the idea of the court was briefly this:—*We are free men*, therefore is the free air our fitting roof. *We serve Odin*, therefore let no roof stand between him and us, save the floor of Valhalla. *We meet in peace*, therefore our spear and bow and javelin are left at home. *But, we are ready to support the cause of our nation when required*, so we bear with us our swords, but sheathed. *We are the defenders of our nation's rights and laws; we are her bulwarks and her shields*; and in witness thereof we come with our buckler in the left hand, with its burnished boss reflecting the shield of Odin, our great protector. Such is the thought of the past, told in words, though then spoken in emblems, as true and as well understood.

Suppose the meeting called. Imagine the haughty

figure of the king in his blue mantle and golden brooch, his helmet surrounded with the kingly crown and adorned with eagles' pinions attached to the iron ring forming the base. See his nobles in mantles of blue, white, and red with their burnished bucklers and sheathed brands, their helmets reflecting the sun's rays from their metal rings or gilded leather surface. And the proceedings open with a religious ceremony. Hawk, or horse, or human prisoner, is "sent to Odin", and from the augury read by the priest from heart or lung of the victim, the success of the project to be entered upon is foretold, or in adverse cases a solemn warning given. After this, the king makes a speech. Some jarl follows, then a thane, then a freeman. When such a speech meets with favour, the assembled heroes draw their mighty brands, so that they flash joyously in the sunbeams, and, as the Swedish poet Geijer expresses it, "with one accord strike their glad applause with their truefast swords on their sounding shields, so that it thunders through the eternal realms of the night." Here we have the sounding cheer, the "Hear! hear!" with a vengeance! and one of the chief uses of sword and shield in a place of national assembly. It is very interesting to see how the love of emblematical or figurative language is manifested in all this. The sword is sheathed until the excitement of the moment breaks forth into applause, and to defend the grand thought uttered, out leaps the emblem of the word combatant, and by ringing contact with the emblem of defence and security (the shield), the song of freedom was sung nearly two thousand years ago that sounds in our English hearts to-day. Displeasure was expressed by ominous silence, more annoying than the hisses and "No, Noes" of these enlightened times.

Notwithstanding the pedantic efforts of the Latinists, the *scutum* has not driven the shield out of our language, nor has the tyrant Rome been able to disarm us of our sword to give us a *gladius* or an *ensis*. The word shield has been so far a protector, that in all the wretched decay wrought by the silly seekers of Latin words for English thoughts it stands firm; and, metaphorically, we may see the sun of Odin reflected from the boss, and we may learn from the story of our own ancestors more useful truths for our own guidance than Roman *stylus* ever scratched, or *penna* ever wrote. For in this one word shield we have a tower of strength, or as the early English would say, a *shieldburg* (Icelandic, *skjöldborg*, German, *schildburg*), which yet may throw off the weapons of our deadly foe. Where the English tongue sounds grandest is where the fewest Latin words are found. The greatest author this world ever saw was an Englishman who had, according to his contemporary, "little Latin and less Greek," and the strongest passages he ever wrote are those of the purest English. And that very fact should teach us that our dear English tongue is a shield as well as a sword; being, in deed, Truth combative and Truth defensive, which, when sounding together through the welkin must ring down a glad "Hurrah!" to us from the mighty dead.

Another characteristic custom of our forefathers was that on the election of a king (who was always chosen from a kingly race), he was placed on a shield and carried round certain parts of his dominion, that he might be personally known to his people. The shield was placed between two spears, and so the king was borne on the shoulders of four men. This was esteemed a great

distinction, and even now in Germany and parts of Sweden, when great honour is to be shown to a man, he is lifted up and carried on men's hands. When the Germans want to say how greatly they love and esteem a man, they say "*wir könnten ihn auf Händen tragen*," "we could carry him on our hands." To this ancient custom also that of chairing the Member is referable.

The form of shield brought to Britain from Scandinavia was round. The Normans, who took possession of that part of France which after them was called Normandy, modified this round form into one of an elongated kite-shape; then came the heater shape of the Plantagenets, and finally, the buckler of Elizabeth's time, small, round, slightly convex, and often provided with a spike in place of the olden boss. So the last form of shield ever used by the English was a return to the first.

It is a very curious circumstance indeed, that the Norman shield should be circular at the top and angular at the base. It is as though the spirit that produced the round buckler were still there, but modified by other influences; as if the Scandinavian shield had been lengthened, or the triangular shield added to the upper half of the round Scandinavian shape. As the sword was lengthened by the Normans, so they elongated and exaggerated the shield. Nor is it mere fancy that would trace in this change of external form a corresponding change in the mind and manners producing it. The Scandinavian worship of deified woman as lady, mother, priestess, vala, and queen, became exaggerated and caricatured in the Norman-French chivalry of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The feudal system is of Scandi-

navian birth, grotesqued by admixture with Romance ideas. And the grand old buckler was abandoned for the odd contrivance known as the kite-shaped shield, resembling the upper half of the old form, with the Frankish triangle appended to it. Then dragons, lions, and other figures were introduced, and the hints for heraldry given by our Saxon fathers were worked into a system. Like the hybrid shield, so the Norman jargon was a bizarre mixture of Romance and Frankish words adapted to a Scandinavian idiom, and retaining a great quantity of pure Scandinavian expressions as the ground-work of this linguistic mosaic. It has died because it was not a language, but, as it were, a sort of slang used by a certain class. Our noble language is like the christmas-tree, which, however it may be adorned with spangles, gilt paper, and other trumpery, to make it look a thing of human art, remains, when these worthless adornments fall away, what it was before—a sturdy Scandinavian pine, pointing still upwards, and evergreen to the last.

And yet, with all this tenacity regarding the word “shield”, the thing itself was not so intensely venerated by the early English as the sword. We never hear of names being bestowed on shields as they were upon swords. There is no instance of a shield being solemnly handed over by a father to his son, or becoming an heirloom in the family. A Spartan woman preparing her son for war presented him with a shield, saying, in the words of the Roman historian, “*Aut hoc, aut in hoc*,” *i.e.*, “Either bring home this shield from battle, or be thyself borne home thereon.” No greater disgrace could happen to a Greek

or to a Roman than to lose his shield. Not so the eminently practical Englisman; he recognised in his shield something which would, in all probability, be cut in two by the enemy, leaving him to protect himself with his sword, on which he accordingly relied more strongly. His Hring Mæl was not likely to be hewed in twain, but there are plenty of instances of the shield being destroyed in fight, from the *Völuspá* downwards. In this weird and ancient poem, there is the following prophetic strophe:—

“Brethren will fight with brethren,
Kindred will fight with their kindred,
Hard will the world grow then!
Many the grievous offences.
A bearded age—a sword age,
An age when the shields shall be cloven,
An age of winds—a grim wolf age.
Till the whole world shall have perished
Shall none be who spareth another.”

Here, although the cleaving of the shields is alluded to as a calamity, it is treated rather as a matter of course, following on the assertion that the age in question was a sword age, when bucklers must be cleft. In the same spirit, King Hring, in the *Frithioff* saga, sings in his own death-lay that:

“In peace delighting,
High in hall drinking,
Well have I welcomed the winter again,
Yet in fierce fighting
Ne’er on peace thinking,
Have I cleft bucklers on billow and plain.”

These two instances are sufficient to prove that the shield, though highly important to the warrior, was not regarded

as something to lose which was a disgrace. In this, the contrast between the Teuton and the Roman or Hellenic warrior is seen.

Connected with this subject is that of the Berserkir, a class of warriors whose function is but little understood at the present day; and as this is closely connected with the story of the shield, I am desirous of drawing your attention rather specially to the consideration of their deeds and character.

It was the custom of the Scandinavians to march to battle, after the horn had sounded the commencement of the march, to the sound of their own voices, singing the verses of the Edda best adapted to the occasion, the praises of Odin, the glories of the life eternal, the doings of their own chiefs or ancestors, or some other song of triumph and martial glory. The sound of these eddaic hymns seem to have been most effective in striking awe into the Roman soldiers' hearts, who were generally already overcome by the very sight and sound of their Teutonic foes, until Marius contrived to accustom them to both, by entrenching them so near to the Teutonic camp, that they could see and hear their Scandinavian and German enemies every day, who would come up and taunt the Romans with cowardice in not coming out to fight, but remaining behind walls. Seeing that the Romans were not yet inclined to attack them, many of the Germans and most of the Goths departed from the host, and then Marius let loose the exasperated legions upon the foe, and what with the numerical weakness of the enemy, and the concentrated rage of the Romans, he had nearly achieved a victory, when an appalling shriek rent the air, and a body of

Scandinavian Berserkir appeared, armed with helm, byrnie and shield. The sight of these tall, gaunt warriors, and the sound of their uncouth song, overcame the courage which familiarity with similar sights and sounds had inspired—the Romans faltered; but what was their horror when the Berserkir deliberately stopped in mid-charge, flinging their javelins with unerring aim at the foremost ranks of the Romans, and then calmly and coolly undressed, casting away helm, byrnie, sword and shield, and then, with a tremendous shout, rushed naked on the steel-clad legions; nor was this all, the Romans recovered and met the shock, but the Berserkir were trained to seize a shield in their teeth, and tear the enemy limb from limb with their bare hands.

The second line of the Romans was broken, and the rest fled to their entrenchments. The Berserkir believed them utterly routed, and returned to the host, which, however, they soon left to go back to Sweden. After which, the Romans attacked and destroyed the remaining Germans and Scandinavians, to the honour and glory of Marius.

Now, this is terrible fighting; but I have heard of men in the Peninsular war throwing away their muskets and rushing up scaling ladders, quite unarmed, against a well-disciplined, unyielding foe. Such a one forced his head and shoulders through a breach in a wall at Badajos and allowed his head to be battered to pieces in the struggle to enter, which he succeeded in doing—a corpse.

The Berserkir were trained to bite the shields of their foes, and to hold them in their teeth as in the little historical fancy-sketch I have given of the episode in the campaign of Marius. Their cries were doubtless most unpleasant to

the Roman ear. They were practised to attack bears, which they were obliged to slay with no other weapons than those with which nature had furnished them; and their custom of seizing the shield of the enemy in their teeth is often alluded to in such expressions as "*Bitter som Berserk biter i skjöld*"—"Bitter as Berserk bites in the shield," where death is spoken of as being so bitter. It shows us two things—first, the strength of discipline among these despised barbarians; and, secondly, that the flinging away of the shield was rather a laudable act. The Berserkir are said to have been under the influence of madness at the time of the resistless attack which they made on the enemy; but it seems difficult to believe that men could go mad at the word of command, and lose their wits in the same way as they lost their shields, flinging them recklessly from them. The assertion comes from their enemies, and so must be taken *cum grano salis*. In *Beowulf* we are reminded of the Berserkir by the hero flinging away his sword and shield and attacking the Grendel with his bare hands, and so tearing an arm from the monster's body. Our own expression "tooth and nail" has a strong Berserk flavour. Berserk madness has also crept into Teutonic phraseology, but this, too, from a Roman source.

Hitherto I have confined myself to the consideration of the round shield, or buckler, used in charging the enemy and also in duelling, where it was held by the second, who not infrequently, when his principal was slain, would take up the battle and sometimes effectually avenge the fall of his friend. This round shield, however, was not the only arm of the kind which they possessed: there was the

scild-truma, or troop shield. This was larger than the buckler, and was carried by servants or slaves, and held with the lower extremity resting on the ground. This was a much larger piece of armour than the other; was of an oval shape and of the height of a man. The thralls were made to hold these *scild-trumas* in close order, either in line or in a circle, while the warriors discharged their javelins and arrows *over rond hreotha*, over the shield defence. And I believe this expression, *rond-hreóða*, or *scild hreóða*, to imply this form and use of the shield only. There is no instance with which I am acquainted of the word *hreoðer* being applied to a shield without the idea of "shooting over" being implied. I, therefore, come to the conclusion that *rond hreoða* being connected with *hreoðer*, "the high point of a house or wall," or "the firmament of heaven," must mean the high wall of tall shields, or the tortoise-like formation, known also to the Romans, made by overlapping the large shield to form a roof. I incline to the first hypothesis. Such a shield was called a *pavois* by the Normans, though the shape was different with them.

The employment of the shield in mythology has given rise to many beautiful and poetical ideas, which are especially Teutonic. For example, the sun, although the attribute of the sun-god Baldur, is yet regarded as Odin's shield, and as partaking of the elements of divinity, light, and heat, which translated into emblematical language, mean wisdom and love. Odin is the All-wise, the All-knowing, the All-seeing. Odin's eye, hidden in Mimer's fountain, represents the prescience of Omnipotence hidden from men in a series of truths so profound

as to be impenetrable to mortal gaze. Odin's eye is the sun when regarded as an emblem of the foresight and wisdom of the Deity; it is his shield when regarded as to its characteristics of splendour and glory, which are his blazon. The form of the sun, a burning disc, was of course to our forefathers too like a shield in form, and too closely resemblant of the colour of the bronze or gold boss to escape such evident comparison; and we meet with such expressions as "lowering the shield" to indicate the sun setting. To a warlike people, such similes were most natural; but we, by the introduction of machinery and realistic writing, have nearly stamped out the good and beautiful inheritance left us by our warlike sires. To us, the moon is a volcanic globe reflecting light from the sun, a satellite without any inhabitants, because without water. The dear old men who believed in Valhalla much more strongly than we do in heaven, knew nothing of the moon, save that he (the moon is masculine in English) was a round disc—a silver shield—the attribute of a grave deity, whose duty it was to measure, to teach, and to guide—to measure, on account of the month which he appoints; to teach, on account of his connection with the waters, which in all ancient writings signify truths of some kind or other. But he was a cold sort of god after all, guiding men calmly over the ocean, measuring their time, appointing seasons, and doing as it were schoolmaster's work. The first day of the week was devoted to the glorious, joyous, resplendent sun, typifying the birth of man into all glorious faculties, lord and ruler of the world, son of Odin, child of heaven, bright and wise, full of love, full of light, a glorious charge on the glorious

shield of Omnipotence. So Sunday, as the day of our birth, promises great things. Then comes the day of the moon—not the astronomical, but the spiritual day, period, state, condition, what you will—and Monday ushers in a master to youth, for such the sun-child has become. He must learn cold hard facts, he leaves the region of bliss, his mother's love in childhood, to enter the colder region of mere external acquirements. The sun-god wears a golden shield, and the moon-god one of silver, the white shield of the adolescent warrior. What more need be said? These two assertions told the whole story to our brave fathers, who knew something of mother's love, something of Odin, and something more of the shield. We are certainly not in the phase of life, whether as individual men or as a state, that may be called Sunday. Our children know everything better than we do! Where is the childlike love of old? No, there are spots in our sun! The faith in the Deity is eclipsed. Better to worship an All-father in humble faith, than to cast down his temples in pride, and say, as somebody in a certain great Book said in his heart, "There is no God." Like the Berserkir of old, we have flung away the shield altogether. What have we instead of these precious gifts of reverence, devotion, and manly courage? Are we in the adolescent state under the silver shield of the moon-god, whose pale, sickly light but ill repays us for the loss of the glorious golden sun?

This is but an imitation of the way our fathers would talk metaphysics (how can I appease their *manes* for using such a word?), and I really and truly believe that their way of looking at Nature as symbolic of something higher

than Nature, was better than our way of finding in her a pretence for seeing less of elevation than of degradation in her lessons.

So the shield meant the sun, the moon the protecting love of All-father, and finally such forms of truth as might be assailed but not destroyed by man. Such was the early belief of our race; but we came to a land of fogs, where we seldom see the sun and hardly ever the moon, where shields are disused, and so the myth of the shield is as dead as Thor's hammer. But it is the true history of our race to see what the progress or decline of thought has been. The fragments preserved in our noble collection will not give us a maker's name or the name of any individual king; and if they did, it would not be history. To those who cared about the individual smith or monarch such a hint would be interesting as a piece of biography, but to us it would form no part of the grand story of our race. The boss is here that has been compared to Odin's shield; that the warrior who wielded it sheds his influence upon us even now from those remote ages is more interesting to us than to know whether his name were Blue-Tooth, Shaggy-Hose, Fair-Beard, or what not; and that we have the means of tracing out the meaning of "myth" and "saga" by seeing the very object before us which the scald elevated into an attribute of divinity, brings us face to face with the living faith of the mighty dead.

So much for the shield as a myth; as an element in poetry it plays a prominent part, and we find many expressions which cannot be considered as mythological or mystic, but purely poetical. Thus, in *Beowulf*, the ardour felt by a warrior is described by his being called *het*

under scilde, "hot under the shield". This expression is found all through Scandinavia. It seems to be the same idea that we should express by "warm work", and this is specially apparent in Swedish poetry, where the words, "*Det går het under skiölderna till*", "it goes on hot under the shield", mean neither more nor less than our "warm work". Again, the name of the goddess of war was "Hilda", consequently the shield is called *hild-ronde*, or "Hilda's disc", and a battle-axe, "*Hilda's barde*", or *hille barde*, whence our *halbert*. A companion in war is called *lind gestealla*, "he who stands nearest another's linden or shield". The highly poetical name for a king as the protector of his people in the word *scilding*, I have already alluded to. It strikes me as being in beautiful harmony with the ancient Sanskrit, *pithar*—"protector", as applied to the relation of father to son, of the divine to the created. In our own more modern poetry, this figure is greatly indulged in, and to shield from harm is the recognised duty of parent or king; and in the old, old times, with which these interesting relics bring us face to face, the very vault above us was called the "Shield with the golden boss and silver studs"!

And yet, in the face of all this poetry and highly mythological turn existent in the minds of our mighty fathers, and the employment of the shield so aptly in poetry and saga, there was among those bold and open spirits not only a want of that veneration for the shield as a portion of armour, which it received from the Spartans, and to which I have already alluded, but, to a very considerable extent, a feeling of positive contempt for some form of shield to which I must now refer.

Unquestionably the word shield means defence and protector; hence anything that defends is a shield, therefore a rampart of earth, a tower, wall, or castle. The proper name of a fortress is *borg* or *burg*, from *bergian*, to “protect” or “hide”; but a tower of defence, a military post, was called a *scild burg* in English; *skjöldborg* in Icelandic and Swedish; and *schildburg* in German. For such a mode of defence the early English, like the other Teutons, had a rooted contempt, nor do we find any allusions to such edifices in the earlier sources of our knowledge of the manners and customs of our race. It is true that in the Eddas we find the dwellings of the gods called their *borgs* or *burgs*; but this is rather in the sense of mansion or palace, than in that of the subsequent shield-burg. In the ancient Scandinavian poem of *Havamál*, the precepts are laid down that:—“No true warrior fights behind walls; none but foes lurk behind doors; the viking’s tent is the broad blue sky; his bed is the earth; his pillow his buckler; his bedfellow his sword.” All of which are dead against towns. The very word town only means a place within palings, the German *zaun*. As they subsequently defended their camps with wooden stakes, they were called towns, as was the possession of a private individual, when it was encircled by stakes. Such elaborate defences as were the delight of the Romans, the Germans despised. Nor would the Scandinavian English ever adopt Roman customs any more than they would Celtic; just as we, at the present day, refuse so much that is good, because “it is not English”. They taught the Gaelic Kelt the use of target and claymore. They taught the Romans how to name the days of the week,

and they taught them that the year had twelve months. Many of their Pagan observances they introduced into Christianity; and Christmas, Easter, Shrove-Tuesday, Whit-Monday, and Ember Week, Ash-Wednesday and other days, are all remnants of Scandinavian festivals, so thoroughly introduced into the Roman form of Christianity, that even in the very heart of the Roman Church they have become as firmly planted as though they had been Christian teachings. So in the matter of arms and art, the English adhered to their own traditions in a most conservative and thoroughly English manner. They adopted no Roman nomenclature of places in Britain. The terrible cut and-thrust-sword that lies here, in grim mockery of glorious war, imprisoned in a fragile glass case, cut down all that Imperial Rome had raised in Britain. In hatred of the shield-work of fortification, the Roman and British castles were tumbled into the dust, for the invader was a free man, whose strongest fence was his own broad breast. Much has been said on the subject of the adoption of certain Romanisms into the early English of the first pioneers of our race; but one of these is so connected with this portion of our subject, that I cannot forbear alluding to it here.

Many towns in England have the suffix "*chester*" added to some English word to make up their names. This has been referred to the supposed custom of our forefathers of taking the English word in question, and adding thereto the Lat. *castra*. Thus, Manchester is Man-castra or Man-camp. Now, we have seen that, although the English had originally no castles, they soon had a name for the idea when presented, and this name was no vamp or

hybrid mixture of Latin and English, but the true, sturdy, strong English noun, *Shield-burg*. Why should they go out of their ordinary way and make a hybrid compound for which there was no need? It always struck me as unnatural that the people who not very long after (historically speaking) became Christians and translated such words as *discipulus* into "leorning cnicht", *centurio* into "hundred-man", etc., should have found, in their own rich vocabulary, nothing to render the hated Latin useless. With the greatest care I have looked into the Roman names of these places to see whether in any one instance the Romans had called it by a compound ending in *castra* or *castrum*. But there is not a single case to be found. Chester is in Latin *Deva*, Chichester *Regnum*, Colchester *Camelodunum*, Doncaster *Donum*, Exanchester *Isca Damnoniorum*, etc., etc. There is an old English noun feminine, *ceastre*, meaning she who encloses, or she who has borne the brunt of battle. In most Teutonic tongues the word for city is feminine; and so in the case before us we find *ceastre* written as a feminine noun, meaning a "strong place", but by no means necessarily a camp. In the Scandinavian languages, the consonant *k* is heard like *k* in king before the vowels *a*, *o*, *u*, but it softens into *tch* before *e*, *i*, *æ* and *œ* diphthongs, and after *s* before *i* it has the power of the modern English *h* in *sh*. From this we see that the *Lægre-ceaster-scir* is pure English all through, written according to the ancient orthographical system which makes Leicestershire to be written with the Scandinavian powers of the *k*, which would hardly apply to Latin names. That we get *caster* in Doncaster, Lancaster, etc., is the result of orthographical

difference in the way of writing ; the use of the *e* after the *k* producing the *ch* sound, and its omission restoring the ordinary pronunciation of the *k* before *a*. I think the circumstance of no Latin names of places in England ending in *castra*, and the improbability of the English employing it as a suffix, taken together with the fact of "chester" being a feminine and a regularly formed English word, like webster, tapster, maltster, etc., justify us in deciding against the identity of "chester" with the Latin *castra*.

The application of the shield-thought to walls is patent to every one, and it acts both ways, for not only is a wall called a shield, but the line of shields formed by a troop of warriors standing "shoulder to shoulder", is called the shield-wall and, contractedly, the *wall*. The wooden walls of England have passed away, our ships, the great defenders of the land, wear armour on the waves. The shields hung round our war-ships are no longer light boards of linden, but terrible masses of steel or iron, repelling not the snow storm of white-feathered arrows, but a plutonian hail of devastating shot, of which, no viking ever formed a thought. What then? Let the shield be light or heavy, wood or iron, so that the heart of oak behind it be but in the right place, and 'English through and through.

Another poetical use of the shield as an emblem, is that where it is compared to the protecting power of the law. Already in the *Havamál*, the warrior is told to hold "his shield to ward off sword blows, and the law 'gainst wrong." And most curious and numerous were the various enactments made by the Scandinavians, who seemed to be as

litigious in peace as they were pugnacious in war. For a long period, of course, the laws made in Scandinavia were handed down by tradition, but in the year 1117, the Icelandic republic wrote all the enactments and precedents which had arisen during the past two centuries in a book, which they called the *grágós*, or grey goose; and it is remarkable to see how closely the spirit of those laws tallies with that of our own Anglo-Saxon code. Everything is made, as far as possible, a matter for pecuniary arrangement, fines being the chief punishments administered. So in the Anglo-Saxon code, a man might calculate to a nicety in how much he could afford to injure his enemy; whether he could only go to the expense of a finger, or enjoy the luxury of a whole arm or leg. The entire spirit of our early legislation is Scandinavian, without a trace of influence from the Roman source; and it would greatly facilitate the acquirement of forensic learning if all the laws written in Latin were to be expunged from the judicial shield. The laws of the Scandinavians were based on freedom, they were made by the people for themselves; and the head of the Icelandic Republic bore the title of "Law-saying man", because his duty was to promulgate and administer the laws made by the Republic over which he presided, and this shield has come down to us nearly intact.

So much for our Saxon shield. I have not given you the history of the various forms which came into use at various times in merry England. Such a disquisition would lead us into a minute consideration of so many points connected with armour in general as to involve a separate work. My object has been rather to show that

our ancestors were not ignorant, brute savages, but men like ourselves, who met the circumstances by which they were surrounded in a clear-headed, practical way, and that what they thought, did, and felt should be dear to us as their direct unmixed descendants, who, however much we may have to be ashamed of, certainly have no reason (as long as we are proud of the English name) to be ashamed of them.

LECTURE III.

SPEAR, JAVELIN, AND ARROW.

THE opening stanza of the oldest poem in the Teutonic cycle, our English *Beowulf*, now preserved in the British Museum, connects the warrior with his weapon in one sounding warlike name. *Hwæt! we gár Dene in gár dagum!* "Gar-Dane", or "Spear Dane", identifies the man with the spear unmistakably. It is as English in formation and sound as horseman, woodman, or any other familiar compound; we feel that it belongs to us as of right, because there is no Latin or Greek to repel us in it. We are not startled at being called "Danes", because at one time that was the generic name for all Scandinavians, including the English themselves. And we have been reminded of this by the Laureate, in his song of Welcome to the Danish Lady, who is, next to our Queen, the one to whom we all look with most affectionate respect. He says, after apostrophising the Princess, "We are all of us Danes in our Welcome of Thee." And there was real poetry in the remark, because poetry implies the expression of some truth clothed in language that brings it to the heart.

It has been supposed, though it is only hypothesis so far, that the Seax gave the name of Saxons to our ancestors. We know for certain that the first Scandinavian kings were

called Skylidings, or the protectors, from the shield. Now we have Gárdanes connecting the arm with the man as his national appellation.

The word *gár*, probably connected with the root *gá*, to go, was applied to the javelin, with two of which each Dano-Englishman was supplied on going into action; and as they were flung "over the shield wall" with terrible effect, there was certainly enough of what is now called "go" in them and their owners to justify the appellation. The use of *gár* in "*gár dagum*" means the days *gone* by, the days of yore, as we now pronounce the word. Curiously enough, the expression "gore" has been retained as pointing out a barbed form in a spear or arrow-head, and also a wedge or spear-head shape inserted into cloth. The expression *gar*, applied to a triangular piece of cloth, is used in Iceland now, and was employed there at a very remote period. As the blow from such a weapon was generally accompanied with a considerable effusion of blood, the vital fluid became known also as gore in poetical periphrasis.

Third in importance to the Scandinavian Englishman, the spear is an emblem of the third day of the week, and of the third person in one form of the Odinic trinity—Odin, Thor, and Tyr. The Rune *Tyr* is a barbed arrow-head or javelin, and indicates the letter T, the god Tyr, Tuesday, or a young warrior.

This was the Rune, therefore, chiefly seen by the Romans, and the name Tyr assuming in its various modifications the sound of *ty*, *tio*, and *tys*, was latinised by them into *tisco*, *teusco*, *tiuto*: hence "Teutones" became the generic appellation of all the Germans. Our own word

“Dutch” and the “German” Deutsch are but modifications of the various modes of pronouncing the name of this prominent deity, the tutelar spirit of the adolescent warrior, and naturally more generally invoked than the mature Odin, who had under his special care those warriors who were already advanced in the art of war.

Our forefathers were accustomed already in Scandinavia to the use of two different kinds of spears, one barbed like the arrows of the North American Indians, the other shaped in the broader leaf-like form familiar more or less to everybody here present. The barbed weapon was the *gar* and the more leaf-like arm the *sper*, of our ancestors, the *spiess* of our kindred Germans.

We have already seen how the sword is identified with the idea of the leaf in nature. The Germans lead us to trace the name of spear from a word common to all Teutonic dialects, denoting the halm of straw with its armed head; for the old High German word for straw is *spār*, differing in orthography, but not in sound, from *speer*, the modern weapon. In our own (I wish I could say beloved) Anglo-Saxon, the word *stræl*, an arrow, is of the same root with *stræ*, straw, so that there is collateral, if not direct, evidence in favour of an early comparison between the spear and the straw. There is a technical distinction made by armourers between the spear-head and the so-called lance-head, which involves so much of philological, archæological, and historical interest, that I cannot forbear going into the subject at once.

It is a commonly received opinion that our word lance is remotely Latin, and certainly intermediately French, in its origin. The fact is, that the Romans had their idea of

this peculiar form of spear-head from the Goths. The word *lancea* is a foreign word in Latin, not older than the third century, A.D. Its origin is simply as follows:—

There is a word common to all of us Teutons, a word as indispensable to us as the bread we eat—the same in Scandinavia, in Germany, and in England—the beautiful, melodious word “land”. Next to the words wife, father, and mother, this word sounds most lovingly to us, as it has done to our race for at least two thousand years already. We meet it in slightly modified forms in various parts of the North, but it remains the same all through: land, lant, lantz, being the three chief varieties. A servant of his country was called the *landes-knecht*, or land’s servant, hence emphatically a soldier. The weapon he bore was the *landes-knechts spiess*, or *speer*, corrupted into *lans knechts spies*, *lance-spies*, and finally *lance*, with the abominable *ce* at the end, which seems to cut it off from our family—though it does not really do so. It is said that the Romans first became acquainted with this weapon in Spain, but I am by no means sure of my authority. The French adopted the corrupted form for the weapon, and then connected the idea so acquired with the first part of the compound designation of the German horsemen, whom they in the later Middle Ages called “lance-quenet”, deducing the name from “lance” as the weapon usually borne by them, instead of from land, the country they fought for. So our word lance is our own property after all. But we must not blame the French and the whole Romance race for this treatment of the word, when we find *lans* used in Swedish, Danish, Dutch, and German, in the sense of spear, but neither in Norse

nor in Anglo-Saxon do we find it so used, although in both of these more ancient tongues the word "land", with many of its interesting compounds, is constantly occurring. This is a striking instance of a weapon and its name being adopted by the Romance from the Teutonic race, and not *vice versâ*. The sharper, longer, and more lance-like form of spear-head was, properly speaking, the *spiess*, *spjöt*, or *spjut*, our spit, on which, not infrequently, the animal to be cooked was roasted. The broader weapon, originally more employed in the chase than in war, is known even now as the boar-spear. This was too formidable a weapon not to be employed in the more serious game of Hilda, when shields were cloven and byrnies cut in twain; not that there is any direct evidence as to the priority of either *gár* or spear, and the MSS. give both. In *Beowulf*, the boar-spear is called *eofer-spreót* (German, *eber-spies*), and the javelin *gár*. The latter expression is employed all through the epic to denote the war-spear. The bill seems to have been the battle-axe, although Thorpe, who is an excellent authority, translates it "sword".

We now come to a very intricate piece of historico-philology, which enters largely into our subject, affecting spear, javelin, and arrow equally.

Among the etymons found in the Old High German for the armed head of wheat or barley, we find *spar*, which again is used to denote a spear. Our own word *spar*, as found among sailors in their peculiar phraseology, is any large portion of the wooden part of the rigging, as a yard, a topmast, or anything of that kind. The contrast between the main-yard of a man-of-war and a piece of straw

is great, and yet they have a common form as far as the long cylindrical appearance of each is concerned. In German, the name for a tree is *baum*, cognate with our *beám*, the modern beam. Spear is cognate with *spar*, and the shaft of the spear is often called the beam, meaning, of course, the tree or wood. That our remote progenitors were warlike there is plenty of evidence all round; and we come to a most convincing proof of their highly poetic feeling in the various uses of the names of their weapons, and we shall be struck with the enormous power of abstract thought such forms of expression convey. In view of the historical part of the question, it will be seen that our difficulty is to discover whether the external or outward form of the wooden beam had priority over the sunbeam or not. History, philology, and poetry seem to stand on even ground; it is, therefore, difficult to say which should take precedence of the other. The beam is clearly traceable to the early Teutonic name for a tree; but it is as clearly applied to the sun's rays. The arrow is a *stræl* in Early English, in Icelandic, and in Russian, cognate with straw and perhaps reed; but the sunbeams in Icelandic are *strål*, and in German *strahlen*, just from the very same kind of reasoning. The sun-god hurls his javelin or mighty spear with us, while he discharges his arrows among the other Teutons and the Scandinavians proper. Which is the prior thought, the sunbeam or the spear? the *strahl* or the arrow?

It has been proved beyond the reach of controversial contradiction, by the researches of Bopp, Pott, Grimm, and Müller, that a higher train of thought is the inner life of the living root in language; that roots refer us to pro-

foundly abstract ideas, and not to vulgar conceptions of mere everyday life. It seems that the farther back we go the more refined do these conceptions become, as though the earliest created beings, who intuitively felt the relation between the outer world of matter and the inner world of mind, rather despised the external world in their grand adoration of that of the soul, and as though the naming of creation were the result of one of those paradisaical gifts enjoyed by the perfect work of a perfect creator. To such a man we may imagine how the destruction of darkness by the glorious darts shot from the source of light and splendour, must have referred him to the defeat of something lower, something baser, something darker than himself, by the mighty blaze of a glory superior to his own! And we obtain sun-myths before we get any history. In our own wonderful mythology we Scandinavians are told that when creation commenced, the prevailing activity was that of the sun's rays, for "the sun shone from the south, and the earth brought forth the tender green things." There had been a void, a yawning gulf in Time's first dawn, when naught yet was, "but there was an icy cold which congealed into a fearful giant, icy and dark. This monster was slain by the arrows of the beneficent sun-god, and of his blood were the rivers made, of his bones the rocks, and of his flesh the earth." Here we have a lovely myth—cold, darkness, and huge size (an attribute of the enemy among all early peoples), vanquished by the sun's rays, and made genial, fertile, and fit for man; but the contest between love and hate, heat and cold, truth and falsehood, or light and darkness, are there too, and the weapons—beams or rays, spears or

arrows—gain the glorious victory. A divine influence is felt, evil is subdued, and creation, after the dark gulf period, proceeds, by the power of the solar arrows, to bring forth the tender green things. Interiorly, evil or cold towards the creator is subdued by the weapons of truth and love; ignorance or darkness flies, and a resplendent day (or period) is the result. The arrows of Apollo, of course, are descended, like our own mythic beams, from a common origin far back in the bright past, and they point onwards to as bright a future.

There are those who would refer all mythology to astronomical or meteorological causes, and others who hold the myth to be purely psychological in its teachings. May not both be true? As there is a soul in man, so may there not be a soul in the indestructible myths of inscrutably remote antiquity? Their very indestructibility declares their more than human origin. Max Müller has made everybody who can read familiar with the charming dawn-myth of *Sarama* and the *Panies* from the far East. Let me, while on the subject of the dart, spear, or arrow, unfold to you one of our own dear myths, containing wonderful well-springs of English thought, though, to our shame, less known among us than those of less congenial type.

Among the gods in high Valhalla, there is one whose beaming attribute is sunshine on his brow. He is a child of Odin, like the rest, but more pure, more gentle, and (in a quiet way) more brave than any of the Æsir. Born in light, of Odin and the sun, Baldur is the god of purity, of innocence, and light. (Who is the god of purity on Olympus? Had there been one, his feelings must either

have been rudely shocked by the ordinary transactions of that unscrupulous band, or have been blunted and got rid of very early.) One of the attributes of Baldur is spotless whiteness, to mark his perfect purity. Twin-born with Baldur is his brother Höder, on the principle that darkness and light are physically inseparably correlative; and morally, of the law that evil is the perversion or rejection of good. The Sagaman observes quaintly on this myth, that "*All evil is born blind.*" This twin-brother of Baldur, Höder by name, is the cause of all dissensions among men, and creates discord wherever he goes. He is disliked by the gods, who are bold and hardy warriors. Among the twelve Æsir, however, there is one who admits him to his friendship. This is *the calumniator of the gods*, Utgård Loki, *the evil genius of Valhalla*; *to him no honours are paid, no altars erected. He is the one of the twelve who is a traitor!* At the birth of Baldur it was foretold by the Fate of the Future, Skuld, that he should fall by a mortal weapon, unless all created objects should swear a solemn oath never to injure him. Nanna, the spouse of Baldur, being of mortal origin, was dispatched to earth for the purpose of winning the desired promise from every created thing. Her known virtue and goodness had already gained her the goodwill of every object, animate or inanimate, that made up the world; but when her eloquence, combined with her beauty, was brought to bear on all "trees and flowers, stones and metals, earth and water, fire and air," they all most readily gave the required promise, save and except the mistletoe, which, being a parasite of the oak, had been overlooked when the oath was exacted from that tree. Some say

that Utgård Loki sat near the bough, in the shape of a white crow, thus hiding it from the view, and that afterwards, in punishment, the crow has always been black.

The mistletoe having been thus omitted, Utgård Loki had no difficulty in maturing his plan for the destruction of Baldur. He speedily shaped an arrow of this wood, and, disguised as an old woman, prevailed on Nanna to take it with her to Valhalla, to be rendered resistless in war by being discharged at Baldur, who, in consequence of the vow, had become insensible to the effects of any blow from any weapon. The gods had instituted a game in which they discharged their various weapons at him. Baldur was placed with his back to a tree, which has in consequence become immortal. This tree can never fade, but remains ever green, and has been known as the holly, or holy tree ever since. Nanna, taking the opportunity afforded by this game, presents her arrow. Each of the gods, anxious to please so good and so popular a personage, wishes to discharge her shaft, when Utgård Loki points out that, owing to his misfortune in being born blind, Höder has never tried his hand when Baldur has played target. The gods yield to the justice of this statement, and Höder is permitted to take up his position, bow in hand, with the fatal mistletoe shaft. Loki, standing behind him, directs his aim. The shaft, on its way to the heart of Baldur, is seen by Odin's war bird, the cock, which, flying up from the ground, tries in vain to intercept it. On flies the shaft and pierces the white god's breast, who falls against the holly tree, which, even to this hour, bears drops of his blood, in the shape of red berries, amid the leaves.

Hela, the goddess of the Under World, claims her rights. The dead must be hers, god or mortal; and now a warm debate arises as to whether this right may be evaded or set aside altogether. At last Hela consents to waive her claim if all objects agree, without exception, to weep for Baldur.

Again is Nanna—some say Frigga—dispatched to Middle Earth, and again do her beauty and eloquence succeed in winning from “hearts of stone”, from stocks, trees, animals, men, streams, seas, hills, metals and flowers, the promise to weep for Baldur; save and except from one; for Utgård Loki, disguised as an old woman, sat on a stone close to which grew a little white flower, and this he carefully hid beneath the folds of his female dress. The little white flower breathed forth an ardent appeal to the demigoddess, who disregarded it altogether as it uttered faintly—too faintly to be heard—“Forget me not!” The poor flower lost its brilliant whiteness of hue, becoming blue from sorrow. The agonised cry went forth, however, and is heard all through the North by him who properly regards the flower, even now.

But to return to Nanna. She collects the tears on the mistletoe (where he who looks may find them still), and repairs to Valhalla triumphant, and holding the mistletoe branch over her lord, with its load of tears promising him life, she embraces him in joy and rapture. But it is shown that the tears of the blue flower are wanting, and Hela claims her prize! She is about to bear him away to the funeral pyre (since called the *Baldurs bál* in the North and “Bale fire” in England), but Odin, as *Deus ex machinâ*, steps in with a compromise, and decrees that the “White

God" (for such is Baldur's more emphatic style) shall remain half the year with Hela, and the other with the gods, giving Nanna the right of remaining with him in both places. To this Hela consents, and the bargain is concluded.

The cock that endeavoured to save Baldur's life at the risk of his own, is appointed the special attendant of Baldur, and heralds his approach when he leaves the lower world. By his shrill note the cock awakens one of the four dwarfs who support the concave heaven. His name is Austr, and his wife Eostra opens the Eostra gate—now called the "East"—to let him pass. The beauty of this myth is quite sufficient to explain the tenacity of the worship of Easter among the Northern nations, and its passage on to Rome.

The tree against which Baldur stood, and which retains the drops of his blood, is called the "holy tree" to this very day; and the custom of embracing a demigoddess under the mistletoe is not extinct in England.

A more complete dawn-myth, sun-myth, and arrow-myth, accounting so clearly for so many of our customs, could hardly be invented, and I consumed much time in careful research among various authorities, and translated the *Völuspá*, the *Havamál*, and other ancient poems and sagas from the Old Norse into English, before I felt myself in a position to place it before you in the form now given.

A remarkable circumstance connected with the Scandinavian *gár*, or javelin, was its being shod with a heavy metal ball or ferrule. The object of this was clearly twofold: first, to allow of its resting on the earth without injury

to the wooden shaft; and secondly, to balance the whole weapon in such a way as not only to avoid undue preponderance being given to the head, but to give a certain amount of momentum to the weapon when flung, which could only be acquired from some contrivance of the kind. The greater weight and height of the stern of the Anglo-Saxon ship were attributable to the same principle; and the bulky butt of the battle spear shows that our forefathers were not devoid of the power of calculation. The same observation holds good of the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian arrow, which seems to have been provided with a metal notch, to judge at least from some of the representations shown in the MSS.

It must be observed that the ball of the sword, too, is very massive, for the same reason. Every person acquainted with the use of the weapon knows how unpleasant an insufficiently balanced blade is to wield. Those before us are furnished with very heavy blades indeed, and the ball is proportionally weighty. The shaft of the spear or javelin was too perishable for any remains to have come down to us, but we find in the grave-hills, invariably traces of its presence in the form of a fine, thin powder, lying in a line connecting the spear-head with the ferrule. The spear-head is always near the head of the warrior, and it was buried with him as if to be ready for use at any moment.

We see the spears before us, and know from their shape, position when found, and the corroborative evidence of the MSS. preserved in our great wealth-hoard of English learning, the MSS. department of the British Museum, that they are specimens of the weapons used by our brave

ancestors in driving out the Britons. And I would call upon you earnestly, to regard the shape of the head in reference to its difference from Roman forms. Such was the spear that the free Teuton flung at the gates of Rome, and struck her tyranny to the dust. Metaphorically, the *Novum Organum* of Bacon was as terrible a javelin hurled against the tyranny of classic lore, opening the way to free thought. And Luther's German javelin, Teutonic as ourselves, was flung as freely at the thralldom of the soul. The Goth and Roman, Teutonic and Romance, have always been antagonistic sounds. Hitherto, we English have snobbishly forgotten our free, Teuton birth, trying to hang on to Roman skirts, because long years before we came to this country, the Romans overcame the revolting savages whom they called Britons, and Romanized the land. We quelled the tyrant Rome in Europe, and the legions left these shores, and then we came and cleared the land of Pict and Briton, took it for ourselves, and made an "Angeln" here. Then came the monk and priest, with bell and book and candle, banning, as it were, our tongue, and Rome triumphed again. But Romans, we are *not*. Latin words strike no deep chord in English hearts, and Roman history is not for us. The classic tales of Greece and Rome are not our myths, they are descendants of common thoughts that live in all true Aryan minds; but still, they differ so immensely as to be opposed as contrasts to the high and moral tone of haughty virtue set as in our Teuton myths. We have adopted Latin words, because as schoolboys we were taught that gentlemen and scholars should know Latin, leaving English to the boor and clown. It is time to fling the spear once more, and

if my feeble voice may lead one pedagogue to teach his boys pure English, then these lectures will not have been written in vain. A dear friend of mine, one whom it is a pride as well as a delight to call a friend, a man of learning, taste, and skill, an ornament to his university, a potency in the land, tells me that the tidings I have brought of our dear fathers from their tombs, are new to him, their voices have been drowned in classic clatter only half understood, while all the precious teachings they would have given have been passed unheeded by.

It would be a proud thought for me if I could imagine that my humble instrumentality had been the cause (however indirectly) of the poisoning of the English spear against our ancient foe, for if this be once fairly done, I will trust to English nerve to drive it home.

The grovelling Britons, the Norman adventurers who came hither with Duke William, all these are called our ancestors; and when we do appear in history, the cry is, "Oh, it is only the stupid Saxons; let us get through them quickly, and begin the History of England!" The story of those Saxon warriors *is* our history; the squabbles of the Norman kings upon the throne of England is *not*.

The English spear should be greatly prized by us, for it is English through and through. Head and shaft are English: strange that the *point* should be French. Our own good word for point is "odd," meaning the sharp point of a spear in outward speech, but something grander in its inner teachings. There as the *culmen* (woe worth the day that makes this word more known to you!), or highest point, it means that which is matchless, that which is without fellow—peerless; and this is the chief meaning

now. When we say that a thing is odd, it is because we have not seen its fellow—it is strange to us. The sense of something droll now given to the word is curious, because we also speak of the point of a joke as well as the oddity of an allusion, where the idea of “point” has taken the place of the older “odd”, and the idea of originality has been applied to it instead. This word, as a part of the name of *Odin* (which means the one without fellow, the peerless *one*, the supreme being, *the highest*), is entitled to more reverence than it meets with from us, the true unmixed descendants of the sons of Odin, the Prince of Valhalla, Lord of the Battle Field, Chooser of the Slain, Rewarder of the Brave.

To this great deity, wonderfully named and known as the All-wise, All-seeing, All-knowing, All-powerful, the sturdy Ash was sacred. Not alone because its stem would furnish his faithful followers with a strong, stout staff for spear and javelin, though this alone would surely be enough to raise it above all trees. What could be dearer to the Spear-Dane than his spear? His *spér-wudu* became of right the chosen tree of his supreme deity. But there are other teachings grouped about the Ash which deserve minute attention, and although the space of time allotted to this lecture will not permit of my doing justice to the tree-myth, I must not pass over it without calling your attention to its most striking points.

The word “Ash”, like the names of many trees, means remotely “Man,” for when the sons of Bör, who were sons of Odin, fashioned the first man and the first woman, they made them from a piece of Ash that floated on the waves. From this cause the first man was called Aska, and his

wife the gentle Embla. The giant Ymir had been slain by the sons of Bör, and of his corpse they formed the world. And the universe altogether was an Ash tree! Does not this clearly show that the mythical tree and the mythical man are but two stages of one great truth? Are we not all acquainted with an inspired book that tells how a blind man receiving sight first "*sees men as trees walking*"? If man be a microcosm, the cosmos is a meganthropos, and the Ash tree means both; in its broad sense it is the world of nature, and in its less general bearing, man.

This myth of the Ash tree is too bright to be passed over in parenthesis, but it contains within it too much Teutonic feeling to be familiar to English people, and so important are its teachings, that I am tempted to give it to you entire.

The mundane tree is a great Ash called *Yggdrasil*, meaning the fear-shaker, or that which causes men to tremble with awe. Its roots are nine in number, and they extend far below the regions known to men, and there they form nine worlds. This region is under the dominion of the pale goddess Hela, who receives the souls of those not killed in battle, the souls of usurers, cowards, adulterers, and those who slay their enemies by unfair means. This region lives with us in the name of its presiding goddess in our own word Hell. Here too live the goddesses called *Norns*, or Fates. Urdur the past, from *Ur*, aboriginal time, or cause, Verdande, *that actually being*, hence the present time. The word exists in the German *werden*, in our own *worthian*, as in the expression "woe *worth* the day," etc. *Skuld* is the *Norn* of the future, existing in our own *shall* and *should*, Swedish *skulle*, German *sollte*, etc.

It appears as though the nine roots of this Ash were occasionally only three, for they are described as such. However, in the mystic value of numbers in mythological teachings, the square of a number only means the same thing as the root intensified, or the same truth or principle in a higher degree. In the trine system we have the region named Nastrond, or the place of the dead, Hela's dominion. The second region, stands over Nifelheim and under the root which is constantly gnawed by the serpent Niehlögg; this region is called Hvergelmir. Under the third root is Mimir's well, in which wisdom and wit lie hidden. In this well is Odin's eye, which he left with Mimir in pledge for a deep draught from the waters there, and from this well the roots of the tree are renewed as they are gnawed by the serpent. Of course this typifies the gnawing decay arising from sensuality, represented all through by the grovelling serpent. The refreshment of sacred truth brought from the holy well restores the plant.

From these roots rise the shaft-like trunk, towering on high. Half-way to the summit is a disc supported by the branches, and this is the Middangård, Midgárd, or Midyard, meaning middle earth—the word earth and girth being of common origin. Round this, as a concentric ring in a shield, flows ocean with her streams called Ellivágir; and in the ocean's bed lies the monster called Jörmungand or Midgárd, serpent, of course the original of the "great sea serpent." This monster lies in a circle, holding his tail in his mouth, by which means the world is kept together. This myth teaches that even the low and sensual nature of man is necessary, and when immersed in and kept down by external knowledge (represented by streams

or ocean), is useful in building up the whole. In the centre of Middangård is a high hill called Valhalla, at the summit of which is the great plain called Idavöllr, where the champions chosen by Valfather meet to practise military games. Here Odin, in helmet of gold, with byrnie of gold chain mail, and with his terrible battle-sword, reviews his mighty host. Here, too, are the dwellings of the gods, twelve spacious halls ; and here the Æsir, or the race of the gods, decide on what wars shall be, what men shall be selected by the Valkyriors (maidens with lovely skin like a field of snow flushed by the rosy north-light) and borne by these maidens from the field of glory to the realms of bliss. Through this hill comes the upper part, the crown, of the mystic tree, and the branches and brilliant silver leaves form the arched roof of heaven with its " shimmering stars for spangles." And what a *roof tree*, what a roof !

But the Æsir, or gods, have another dwelling by Urdur's fountain, to which the road lies over the bridge called the Rainbow by mortals, but Bifröst by the gods. They ride up from thence on their prancing steeds, clad in their golden mail, over the beaming bridge, to judgment and to martial games. The keeper of the bridge is Heimdall, porter to the gods, and he has a horn to rouse these heroes at the last day, when the sons of flame shall storm the gate, rush over Bifröst's beautiful bridge, and meet the gods in combat. Then shall the serpent unfold his coil and the world shall be *undone* ; Surtar, or Satur, the swart one, with the sword of flame, heads the charge of the monsters who throng to the fray. The gods are slain, but so are the monsters. The gods shall be renewed after this dark day of Satur, this Saturday of woe ; but the

monsters Hela (death), the horrid wolf Fenrir, the serpent, and all the brood of Loki, and the giantess of the Iron-wood, shall perish never to rise again. A new heaven, a new earth, shall be created out of the refined ashes of the past, and *they* shall never pass away.

To say that this lovely myth is the production of a savage race is absurd. To say that it is an adaptation of something Greek or Roman is equally so. There is not a Romance or Hellenic feature in the whole, and it is history, for it shows us what the minds were of those grand warriors whose sons we "yarks of the ocean" are.

The host of warriors who bore Odin's spear were called collectively the "Ashen forest"; and in *Beowulf*, in a few rapid and masterly strokes, his whole band is brought before us as the champions place their armour in a ring, where the seamen's arms are all grouped together, "*æsc-holt ufan græg*," the ash-forest grey above, meaning the spears above the armour. In another part the hero speaks of having governed the Ring-Danes for fifty years, and protected them "*æscum and ecgum*", with ash-wood and edge, *i.e.* with spear and sword.

There was a day devoted to Odin, the middle day of the week, representing middle life in man, when wisdom and strength are mature, as I have had the honour of pointing out for the first time in a paper read before the British Archaeological Association, entitled the "Myth of the Week." This was the grand day of assemblage of the wise and brave. This took place once a week, but there was once in the year a most solemn Odin's-day, called Ash-Wednesday, when this charming myth was expounded. It was a week of weeks, *i.e.* seven weeks before the festival

of the wife of Austr, the East, who herself was named Eostra, our Easter; and during this time the days began to lengthen and be called the lengthen-time, or lenten time, now shrivelled up to Lent.

Thus our spear-shaft has a kingly pedigree, a god-like "family-tree", and it is English, pure and simple, strong, firm, enduring. The *hasta* is forgotten, thrown away for ever, known only to the antiquary and the student; but the spear lives on, it can never die, for the ashen shaft of *Yggdrasil*, that makes men tremble with dread, is as immortal as the English Shakespeare whom we all of us must love.

We now come to some very curious considerations touching the smaller form of spear discharged from a bow, and called *stræl*, *flá*, or *arewe*, whence our modern arrow. I am inclined to think that the two latter words referred respectively to the two different forms of arrow-heads which have come down to us. One is barbed, and the other is leaf-shape like the spear; and as we find the expression *guthflán*, or war-arrows, definitely pointing out the use of one of them, I apprehend that *arewe* was the term for the instrument of the chase. Whether the barbed weapon was used for the chase, and was therefore the *arewe*, and the more spear-like head the *flan*, must remain a matter of conjecture, because we find both indiscriminately dealt with in the MSS. We obtain both forms in the tombs, and both forms occur in stone. I believe *stræl* to be common to both.

Mr. Ackerman, a well-known authority on Saxon matters, and whose work on Pagan Saxondom cries aloud for a new edition, is of the opinion that the Anglo-Saxons despised the bow and arrow, as being the weapon for the

robber and secret assassin, rather than for the noble warrior. I regret to say that all the heroic lays and sagas of the North are dead against this theory. He bases his opinion on a line in the *Codex Eboricensis*, where the expression *sceaft reafere*, "a shaft for the robber", is thought by him to be a proof that the arrow was deemed by the Saxons as fitting only to be used by robbers. If this were so, the previous line, *scyld sceal ccmpan*, "shield shall the champion bear", would mean that a warrior should only have a shield and no shaft, which is easily disproved by a reference to *Beowulf*, where the shaft, whether of spear, javelin, or arrow is identified with the hero-life. There was a MS. which perished in the burning of the Cottonian library in 1731. It had, however, been carefully printed by Hearne, and this printed copy is the actual text of Thorpe's reproduction in his most useful *Analecta Anglo-Saxonica*. Although of the tenth century, it is as redolent of the old Viking spirit as though it had been written in the fourth. Two armies are described as parted by the Pant, and the arrow as a weapon of war is thus alluded to :—

“ Het tha bord beran
 beornas gárgan,
 thæt hi on thám cá-steðe
 ealle stódon
 Ne mihte thær for wætere
 werod to tham othrum
 thær com flowende
 flód æfter ebban
 lucon lagu-streamas;
 to lang hit him thuhte
 hwænne hi togædere
 gáras beron

Hi thær Pantan stream
 mid prasse bestodon
 East-Seaxona ord,
 and se æsc-here
 ne mihte hyra ænig
 othrum derian
 buton hwá thurh flanes flyght
 fyl gename."

"He commanded them to seize their shields,
 the warriors to march
 till they on the river side
 all stood.

The hosts there for the water
 could not engage one with the other,
 for there had come flowing
 flood following ebb;
 they were separated by the water streams.

Too long it seemed to them
 before they together
 battle spears brandished.

The power of the Pant stream
 boilingly parted them.

The East Saxon battle front
 and the ash-spear bearers
 might not each other then
 harmful encounter,
 save him who through the arrow's flight
 his fall received."

The order of fighting in the wedge also proves that the arrow was used in war, where the *sceoten sendað over scild hreaðan flacor flángeweorc*, "the shooters send over the shield's defences, flakes of arrow-work." From the *Völuspá*, where Baldur is shot by Höder, down to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, where Harold is slain at Hastings, every MS. claims the arrow for an instrument in the grim game of war, so that notwithstanding my deep

respect for the authority of Mr. Ackerman, I am compelled to oppose it here. In these cases, too, *flán* seems the war-arrow, *arwe* being met with in hunting and archery scenes, while *stræl* is evidently a collective expression, including like *gár*, the more specific terms.

Certain it is that the leaders, although familiar with the bow, preferred as a matter of taste to use the sword and spear. Whenever small parties of champions are spoken of, they are armed, as in *Beowulf*, with axe, *scyld byrnie* and *hring-mæl*, or battle-sword. One Northern warrior named Kolson boasted of nine accomplishments. He could play at chess, engrave Runes, read, handle the tools of the smith, run in snow-shoes, shoot with the bow, row with the oar, sing to the harp, and compose verses. Certain warriors are reported, like Kolson, to have been most dexterous with the bow, but to have held it beneath their dignity to fight with any other weapons than the sword and spear; just as a modern colonel or general may be a very good shot as a private accomplishment, but would certainly never think of going into action with a rifle. A prevalent opinion in the North was, that what Sir Lucius O'Trigger calls a "long shot" was beneath the dignity of a gentleman. In Tegnér's modern Swedish version of the Frithoff's *Saga*, he says:—

"Full short is the shaft of the hammer of Thor,
Frey's sword is an ell in the blade;
'Tis enough for the brave, but the longest in war
Is too short if the owner's afraid."

A very important question now arises with regard to the flint-weapons—axes and arrow-heads—found in the tombs of the Scandinavian and Pagan Saxon warriors,

Skulle. Thorlak, a learned Dane, in a very exhaustive work on *Thor og hans Hammer*, states his opinion that the stone-weapons found in barrows were mere *simulacra armorum*, meant to typify the power of Thor over the elves and spirits of darkness, and to give the warrior the means of defending himself against them. Like the Grendel in *Beowulf*, the bodies of the *swart* elves were impenetrable to steel, so that stone arrow-heads, of the forms existing in metal, were made and supplied. There is no account of stone-weapons ever having been used by the Northern nations in war, but their barrows or grave-mounds are full of them. Thorlak says that among so abstract and emblem-loving a people as the Scandinavians and their branches, such typical weapons would be precisely what we should expect to find, and accordingly we do find them. Thor killed the Frost Giants by launching his hammer at them, emblematical of the destruction of evil principles by divine influence, and cosmically the effect of the lightning in destroying evil influences in the earth. Thorlak states distinctly that the cuniform stone axe is emblematical of the splitting force of the thunder-bolt hurled by the Deity, the arrow-head of its piercing power, the hammer-like axe being a type of its crushing force. These are the stone-weapons found in barrows. To have cut these heads with flint seems impossible, there must have been metallic tools to work with, nor is it probable that the refinement of the barbed form would have occurred to people who had never seen this kind of head in metal. That men using iron should have copied iron heads in stone is proved by both iron and stone being found together. Where the stone axes and heads have

been found alone, the iron specimens have decayed, having been eaten up with rust. And there is also great probability that the stone-weapons were formed to resist the tooth of time, so that they should be at hand for use against the evil ones when the spear-heads and javelins had perished.

The amazing find of flint weapons exhibited by Mr. Borlase at the British Archæological Association on the 21st November, all discovered in South America, is most interesting. Are the people who used them really those who were forced away from Europe westward? Are those stone heads really national, or rather epochal? I think not, because the spear and barb are both copied, and they must have pre-existed in iron, and been imitated by an imitative race like the Russians, who copy in their own way what they see of Western civilisation. The South American savages now make their stone weapons by the aid of *copper tools*, as Mr. Borlase has seen done, proving my position that metal tools must have been used in producing such forms. The probability is, therefore, that the manufacture of arms being enormous in proportion to that of other things, the imitation weapons were also largely made for burial and emblematical purposes. They were seen and known by the people driven westward, and, failing iron, copied also in stone by them.

I have pointed out the fact that the Normans lengthened everything. Their sword was longer; their shield seemed like the half of a Saxon buckler with the Frankish triangular shield put on below and then elongated into a kite shape. The byrnie was elongated, and received the

addition of chain mail sleeves. The nasal of the helmet was elongated into a new form; and in harmony with this curious law, the bow lengthens into stately proportions, though it is not yet the English weapon of Cressy and Poitiers; but with its length it increases in bulk, requiring greater force to pull, and a longer arrow. The Saxons drew their bows to their breast, the Normans to the ear, gaining the difference in the length of the arrow, and obtaining, consequently, a considerable increase of momentum. The bow annoyed the Saxons at Hastings, and rendered them impatient, but they would have gained the day with their terrible axes had they not weakly broken up their strong formation as an impenetrable wedge, deceived by William's ruse of withdrawing his men as in panic. When once that wedge was broken, the Norman cavalry had the English at their mercy; and who escaped of our side from that field of carnage?

Much has been said about William's stratagem of shooting upwards, so that his arrows should fall perpendicularly downwards on the heads of the enemy. Now, had they worn iron helmets this would have been useless, unless he calculated on the off chance of men looking up to see whence the arrows came, as Harold appears to have done. But when we remember that the helmets were only of leather, strengthened by the rim of steel that bound the head, and the two rings fixed to this lower rim and crossing each other at the apex, where the spike now is in the German *helm*; when we reflect on this construction of their helmets, and on the slight defence offered by the leather between the strengthening rings, we are struck with the sagacity of the Norman duke in

bringing his powerful arrows down on the weakest part of the Saxon armour. A point blank arrow might have been deflected. It would have all the chances against success that the helmet could offer, but coming crashing down between the two intersecting rings of steel, it would make short work of the Saxon.

And with all the bitter hatred of the oppressed towards the oppressor, the Saxon saw his weakness, and the free yeomen and cnihts, and the thanes and the yarls, all felt that they must become bowmen. The Norman had been false to his Northern birth in forsaking his mother-tongue—perhaps the basest and most contemptible act in history! He next became false to his birth in that he erected castles and towers of defence behind which to shield himself from the English, and from whence to descend upon and annoy them. But the Englishman, true to his Scandinavian blood, retained the language of his fathers, all the more for Norman prohibition, and scorned the shieldborg, even as Hrolf Krake might; so he took to the greenwood-tree, put himself beyond the pale of French and Roman law, as we ought to do ourselves, and thus became an outlaw. Such men as Harewood the Saxon, and other forerunners of bold Robin Hood, have done us as much good as the Norman did us harm. And—*fas est ab hoste doceri*—the Saxon adopted the Norman bow to shoot down the Norman. By degrees he improved upon it. Instead of the Saxons becoming imitation-Normans (as there had been some danger of before), the Normans became English. The noble language of Shakespeare was saved, and is every day throwing off some of its Romance shackles.

In the time of Edward III, in 1362, three hundred years after the Norman usurpation, a law was passed that all pleadings should be in English, because French had become unknown in the land. The immense vigour of the English tongue overcame its foreign trammels, as the vigorous yeoman flung off all allegiance to the alien rule. The language grew and flourished, and its ring was as true as that of the bowstring of the "outlaw", whose bow grew to be the defence of the land and terror of the French. Yew trees were planted in churchyards to supply the village youth with this noble weapon. Prizes were distributed to the most successful competitors among these volunteers of the fourteenth century; noble and yeoman attended the matches; England was England again, to some extent at least; and Edward the Black Prince was almost as English as that Prince of Wales who is one of the trustees of this British Museum.

LECTURE IV.

THE BROOCH.

THERE is no article of Saxon—or, rather, of Old English—workmanship that has come down to us more beautifully preserved than the brooch. The specimens in the British Museum collection are most interesting examples of early English art, and of articles less familiar to us than the sword and spear of our fathers. Strange to say, also, the names of these objects have passed away with the memory of those who bore them. We were at war with Rome, and our *sword* was better than the *gladius*; so our sword lives on, and glaive is dead. The *scutum* vegetates an odd sort of life in our comic “esquire”, while the shield is as solemn in its function of protection as it was two thousand years ago. But stupid pedantry has copied the names of French and Roman gauds of which a childish dandyism copied the originals. Still we may pardon the dandy and the coquette their assumption of foreign names for jewellery if only the *man* of England feels the meaning of sword and shield as handed down through ages.

My lady friends would call this thing a brooch; my learned antiquarian hosts of the British Archaeological Association (to whom I owe a vast debt for much kind

and courteous attention since my return to England) would say it was a "fibula". The wearer, who ought to know what he or she was about, would call it a *preon*, a *spang* or *spange*, from the verb *spannan*, or *gespannan*, "to clasp", "to join". The word brooch is French, and does not sit comfortably in consequence. We are never quite sure about the orthography. If we write it with an *a*, "broach", it looks archaic and odd; with the two *os* it looks queerer still. I wish I might call it a *spang* or *preon*, because I feel that the words *mean something*. The span which we measure with our fingers means just so much as we can unite or join with one hand. In Swedish, *spång* is the name of a little temporary bridge uniting two sides of some narrow channel. In this latter sense we speak of the span of the arch, of spanning the river; we come so near to *spang*, and then lose it! Yet in the sense of glittering ornament, a shining point of metallic lustre, the word lives still in "spangle". "The spangled heavens" is one of the finest epithets ever bestowed on the blue vault above us, and *we feel it*, because it is English. The buckle and the brooch are both of them ornamental, both of them used to unite two portions of dress. The larger brooch was probably the *gespang* and the buckle the *spange*; both are, so to speak, spangles. Cognate with the idea of connecting two portions of one thing by a *spange* we have the Icelandic *spenna*; so, when Thor puts on his belt of might, the act is called "*spenna meginjörðum um sik*," "to clasp the *meginjörda* about him".

The word buckle is most inappropriate to our idea, so much better expressed by *spånge*. It is formed from the Latin word *bucca*, "a cheek", and was applied to the

cheek-like roundness of the raised ornamental part of a connecting brooch. In French, ringlets are called by the same name as a buckle, the word *boucle* meaning a buckle, an ear-ring, or a ringlet—the first from its resemblance to the form of the cheek, and the other two from their proximity to it.

It would naturally be supposed that a warlike nation should be well supplied with buckles to fasten their belts, their cloaks, and other portions of dress; and accordingly we find them everywhere, and always with an amount of ornamentation that shows how they were prized. They are of bronze, both gilt and plain, sometimes of brass, sometimes of gold. Most of the iron buckles have crumbled into dust and are lost to us; but the specimens still left afford us food for interesting speculation.

When we reflect that the early English greatly surpassed us in the art of colouring; that we cannot dye cloth, stain glass, or colour parchment as they did, we may easily suppose that their blue, purple, and crimson mantles of state were richer in their hues than anything we see about us now. When we reflect that they possessed the art of gilding leather to perfection, and that the borders of their white tunics were of this material, shining like burnished gold; that the leathern part of the helmet was, in the case of *kyning* or *jarl*, richly gilt; that the *byrnie*s of the nobles had gold threads woven into the breast and neck; that they wore rich gold arm-rings; that the sword-hilt was adorned with gold, the scabbard richly gilt, the shield adorned with an external ring of gold or at least gilt leather, while the centre was formed of a bronze or polished iron boss—we are prepared

to find the minor articles of this sumptuous equipment either bronze or bronze gilt; and when we look round in this collection, we find them chiefly bronze. One specimen has been carefully cleaned and polished, and it may be seen at once that among gold or richly-gilt ornaments, it would be difficult to distinguish it from those in the more precious metal. Fancy such a military dandy, armed, however, with a tremendous battle-axe or a mighty spear, and you will have a figure before you which the most exclusive of any *noblesse* in the world might be proud indeed to claim as ancestor.

The great brooch or *gespáng* was used by both sexes as fastening for the mantle, just on the breast and off the shoulder. Of this ornament the forms before us are nearly all those of which there is any record. The large *gespáng*, the smaller cross-like ornament, also of the same class, the lesser buckle or *spange*, and the curious cup-formed brooch, are all here in a high state of preservation, and I am not aware of any more varieties.

Let us commence our study to-day with an investigation into the king's *gespáng*, which I, in deference to the prevailing taste, have very reluctantly called in the syllabus the "Royal Fibula". A similar one to the specimens in the British Museum was found at the end of the last century in the tomb of a Saxon lady on Kingston Down; but they were worn by men as well as by women.

The brooch in question was found high on the breast near the right shoulder. The specimens before us are richly worked. They are well supplied with garnets and other stones in a very peculiar and rather fanciful setting; the bottom is worked in a pattern which I have seen in no

other remains of ancient people. I believe the kind of work is technically called "stippled", but is certainly not often met with. The scroll work and the setting of the stones deserve attention, being very peculiar. The former is elaborate and original in its spirited curves, and both bear evidence of considerable skill. The round shape seems that most usually worn, and the one most highly ornamented. These round brooches are all smaller than that found on Kingston Down, which is "three inches and a half in circumference"; it is quite as full of ornament and costly setting as these. "It is covered with ornaments of filigree work in concentric circles, and is set with garnets", according to the statement of the late antiquary, Mr. Thomas Wright.

Smaller brooches are found of less pretensions as to adornment, some are absolutely plain, and fashioned like the cheap silver articles now sold in England as Scotch brooches. These simply consist of a ring, with a tongue or pin travelling round it by means of a small cylinder to which it is attached. An opening in the ring permits of the passage of this pin in fastening the garment which it is made to connect. By pushing the ring a little to one side, the end of the pin is made to lie on a firm surface, the ring holds the pin and the pin holds the ring. This primitive form of brooch is most effectual as a means of securing a mantle, and is evidently of higher antiquity than the more elaborate brooch just noticed.

There are, among the specimens in this collection, some extraordinary looking *preons*, which are certainly of more ancient date. The complicated cruciform pattern does not point to Christian influences, and the tremendous

size of some of them marks them as something more in accordance with the taste of a pre-Christian warrior than with that of a later age. The same kind of brooch, as represented in the smaller form of these complex crucial ornaments, is found in Frankish graves on the Continent, and these are very peculiar in shape; they have not been imitated in the later Middle Ages, and come upon us now as something new. There would be a fair scope for enterprise if a London jeweller would take one of these curious *preons* for a model and issue an old friend for a new dress. The crown or top of the ornament has a crested shape, reminding us strongly of a form of Hindu art, but this was really the bottom of the ornament and was worn downwards. There are generally five points, or as we might say pearls, if we keep up our comparison with the coronated form, but this number is not constant. Brooches very similar to these were found on Kingston Down, already alluded to as the scene of considerable discoveries of early English treasures at the end of the last century.

The cup, or saucer-shaped brooch is a well-known Anglo-Saxon form. At the bottom there is generally some device, occasionally a human face, introduced, always badly executed, for the study of any portion of the figure seems to have been greatly neglected by the early English. Their drawings of ships were the most true to the object represented of all that they attempted to portray, and their drawings of men the least so. They were greatly addicted to making all designs in art subservient to the scroll. The foliage of their trees, the turn of the limbs in men and animals, all seem to partake of the scroll feature. This would naturally lead them to the

production of very flowing initial letters in the illuminated MSS., and any person who has been in the habit of consulting such, will admit that the Anglo-Saxon initial letters are the perfection of this kind of art.

Closely connected with this tendency to produce a flowing, wave-like scroll, is the circumstance of their natural and free delineation of mantles and drapery, for the mantle was a very significant part of the dress among our forefathers. The long mantle was worn on state occasions, at *ting* or at *witena gemót*, and the shorter garment in hunting and in war. The short cloak was always fastened on the right shoulder, the longer mantle was often clasped at the throat. Mantles were frequently very richly ornamented with gold lace bordering, or with the gilt leather to which reference has already been made. The collar seems, in the case of royal personages, often to have been of rich fur. In some of the MSS. there is an indication of settings of costly gems all down the gold border. Bishops, and even inferior ecclesiastics, are represented with very highly ornamented mantles, and among the Angles proper with the circular form of brooch.

Our forefathers were eminently practical in their social arrangements; and in their divisions of society into the necessary ranks and classes into which it naturally falls, they showed no small amount of skill and discernment. These classes were regularly distinguished by some external mark which rendered them familiar to all. There are traces in Scandinavia of such distinctions being especially discernible in the colour of the mantle; white being the hue of the novice soldier, and shown in his shield

and war-cloak; blue or red the emblem of nobility or advanced military rank.

There is every probability that such was the case with us, and we should certainly have had valuable information on this point handed down to us, but for the loss of so many Anglo-Saxon MSS. from various causes, chiefly from the desire of the Norman monks and heads of monasteries to destroy all traces of the original popular feeling among the English. Still, there is every reason to suppose that among the remains left us we may be enabled, by patient research, to gain as fair a knowledge of the dress and habits of our ancestors as that possessed by any other modern nation of the way of life of their forefathers.

The ladies were noted for the extreme propriety of their dress, as they were for the high-toned purity of their conduct. And in saying these words I strike the key-note of English—*i.e.*, Teutonic—excellence in other matters. Wherever a laxity of morals prevails, the nation is soon broken up, and loses its claims to respect. The Romans despised but dreaded the barbarians, and yet we find involuntary testimony yielded by Latin writers to the high moral tone of our forefathers. Tacitus says:—“A strict regard for the sanctity of the matrimonial state characterises the Germans, and deserves our highest applause. Among them female virtue runs no hazard of being offended or destroyed by the outward objects presented to the senses, or of being corrupted by such social gaieties as might lead the mind astray. Severe punishment is ordered in case of infringement of this great bond of society. Vice is not made the object of wit and mirth,

nor can the fashion of the age be pleaded in excuse for being corrupt, or for endeavouring to corrupt others. Good customs and manners avail more among these barbarians than good laws among a more refined people."

When the people of the North migrated into the Southern parts of Europe, they carried along with their laws a chastity and reserve which excited universal surprise. Salvian, a priest of Marseilles in the fifth century, exclaims: "Let us blush," says he, "and be covered with a confusion which ought to produce salutary effects. Wherever the Goths become masters, we see no longer any disorders except among the old inhabitants. Our manners are reformed under the dominion of the Vandals. Behold an incredible event!—an unheard of prodigy! Barbarians have, by the severity of their discipline, rendered chaste the Romans themselves; and the Goths have purified those places which the others had defiled by their debaucheries."*

The proper regard for the character of woman is akin to worship, just as the improper or immoral view of her position leads to contempt. Respect, admiration, and holy awe of her wonderful power over us as mother, sister, and wife lead to a holy love which binds not only a family but a nation firmly together; and these elements of noble regard for woman the Scandinavian warrior possessed in great perfection. He went rather beyond the vulgar craze about "woman's rights", for the same stern champion who was too high spirited to yield to any earthly power in any question of his own rights and

* Malett's *Northern Antiquities*. Bohn's Edition, p. 305.

privileges, had, in whatever related to the fair sex, no will but theirs. He was, in fact, a *thorough gentleman*, and the proof of it lies in his perceiving that woman was to be revered as well as loved. The Scandinavian warrior was a shrewd thinker, a wise leader, a clever poet, possessed of many arts, of immense physical strength and vigour, owing, as Tacitus says, to the morality of his life. He was a man not easily diverted from his own chosen path, to which he was obstinately devoted; but he had observed that his conclusions, founded on logical deductions, were often wrong, while women, without apparently taking the trouble to think at all, would at once pronounce a decided opinion, which generally turned out right. Of course he would refer such a fact to immediate divine inspiration; nor was he much in error in so thinking. The German women were therefore admitted into the councils of the men; they were consulted on all important business, especially on such matters as had proved too tough for the sword-like intellect of the men to cut through. Consequently, we find ten priestesses to one priest! We find our fathers listening to the advice of women upon all possible occasions, and thoroughly believing in them. Whether they were right or wrong the result has shown. Rome, who held woman as a thrall or plaything, was humbled to the dust; we took her proud possession on this island, and a lady wears the crown.

In all cases where that almost awful respect for woman prevails which we, I hope, inherit, and have shown in our literature from Alfred down to Thackeray, we find in all delineations her form most carefully draped. In countries

where opposite feelings are entertained on this most delicate point, she is represented more or less uncovered. Our Saxon ancestors, true to their Scandinavian origin, present her completely draped with long and flowing garments. Even in such difficult positions as that required for the dancing, or rather tumbling, of the daughter of Herodias, where the action of turning a somersault is represented, we are struck with the delicacy which introduces a female attendant to assist the performer and to take careful charge of the drapery of the tumbling figure, so as to dispose it with scrupulous propriety.

I maintain these statements to be more important to us, and more historical for us, than all the battles ever fought or political squabbles ever jangled over; and it is our subject to-day, for this lady's brooch, lying here before us in its case, is a fitting emblem, in its circular form and wealth of precious stones, of that priceless perfection and imperishable virtue that holds the mantle of our State together. And Tacitus says distinctly that "the Germans" (meaning the Scandinavians and ourselves) "suppose some divine and prophetic quality resident in their women, and are careful neither to disregard their admonitions nor to neglect their answers". Strabo says that "the Cimbri were accompanied by venerable and hoary-headed prophetesses, apparelled in long linen robes most splendidly white. We also find this people *always attended by their wives, even in their most distant expeditions*, hearing them with respect, and after a defeat more afraid of their reproaches than the blows of the enemy."

Here we have the reason why the proud, virtuous, and warlike Scandinavian held no community with the

wretched Britons whom Rome had conquered but could not civilise. Read what Cæsar says about the disgusting mode of life of these revolting savages, and compare it with Tacitus, Strabo, or Salvian, speaking of the Goths. *We* never could have intermarried with such people, nor did we, for we had our wives with us on the distant expedition. The only instance on record of such union is that of the marriage of a pagan Saxon lady, the daughter of Hengist, with the British King Vortigern. He was compelled to renounce Christianity before she would accept him, and “wedded her on payan’s lay”, *i.e.*, according to pagan rites. Notwithstanding which, the English always regarded it as a *mésalliance* on her part, and despised him for renouncing his religion.

Without attaching too much importance to the story of Rowena and Vortigern, it is so far historical that it shows us that the English women accompanied the expedition to England. Our foremothers were therefore as truly English as our forefathers, which accounts for that pure English type which reflects the beauty of Nanna and the radiance of Freya in those Valkyriors whom it is our privilege to meet in society in the nineteenth century, as fresh, as pure, as bright and as English as they were in the fifth.

We learn from Strabo that the priestesses wore white robes of a splendid whiteness. The Anglo-Saxon ladies were as proud of the whiteness of the linen which they spun as they were of the coloured gowns, tunics, mantles, kirtles, and wimples which they also wore. The mantle, like that of the men, was either short or long. For hunting (of which the early English ladies were as fond

as the Di Vernons of our day), the mantle was short, so as not to impede the free action of the hand in drawing the bow. The kirtle reached to the knee, and was of white or any colour; the under tunic was of fine linen, except in the case of nuns (who mortified themselves by having it of wool). The *gunna* or gown was very long—as long as the riding-habits of to-day—when worn for hunting purposes. For home wear they were still very long, but not worn with trains. The wimple, like the Russian *baschlik*, covered the head as a hood, and concealed the throat, neck, and upper part of the dress. The historian of the Anglo-Saxons, Sharon Turner, remarks on the female dress of these periods that—"All the ladies have their necks, from the chin, closely wrapped in this manner, and in none of them is a *fine waist* attempted to be displayed, nor have their heads any other covering than their hood."

Besides the long gown, a short one is mentioned, "sewn in our (*i.e.*, English) manner," besides ribbons and cuffs (*bindan* and *cuffian*). These articles are left by will by a certain Wynflæd to her daughters; and there is further mention of a covering *mæntel*, or cloak, so that, notwithstanding the want of the bonnet, which Sharon Turner seems so to miss, there was every chance for a dress-maker then, as now, making up for what was lacking in supplies from the milliner.

The rich borders of the mantles worn by the Hláfðige, set with precious stones, the necklaces, rings, earrings, bracelets, *châtclaines*, and other articles, show that she held no subordinate position. The magnificent brooches here, and those found on Kingston Down, are proofs that

she was highly regarded; while the power of disposing of her goods and chattels at her own will and pleasure shows that she was a free agent, and quite as much entitled to act for herself as a man would be. We learn, from the valuable collection of Anglo-Saxon laws printed by the Record Office, under the editorship of Mr. Thorpe, that women were very specially under the protection of the law. Offences against them were most severely punished, and are specified with a minuteness truly astonishing, reminding the reader of similar enactments in the *grágás* of Scandinavia.

In Scandinavia proper, however, women had almost greater privileges than men. With them lay the right of divorce, for obtaining which all that was requisite was that they should denounce the husband as a coward, or unworthy, and they could publicly throw him off for ever. It must be admitted that this right was seldom appealed to, as the feeling of matronly dignity was likely to be wounded by the wife's admission of any unworthiness on the part of the husband. But when such extreme measure was resorted to, the husband had to return the money or other dowry, which had been paid with her, and she was free to form a new connection with another, without stain or reproach; so great was the contempt with which a coward was regarded throughout the North, and so high was the veneration in which the ornament of the home, the wife, was held. And it is a great argument in my mind in favour of the refinement of Northern civilisation to find that our rugged ancestors understood the value of the treasure bestowed upon them. We do not find the dress of women extravagant or too showy.

They did not use such large bracelets as the men, nor, save in the case of the brooch before us, was this ornament specially marked as more attractive than brooches worn by men. It would seem as though the pure white robes, or coloured gown and full wimple, were designed rather to conceal than to enhance the powerful attractions already bestowed by nature.

The mantles of the ladies, like those of the men, seem to have been worn as distinguishing marks of rank, as well as to protect the wearer from cold. The earlier representations of noblewomen nearly all give handsome mantles, richly edged with gold and adorned with gems, as the chief token of rank. Strutt, who has done more than any other author to make us familiar with the dress and habits of our remote progenitors, enters very warmly into the question of the delicacy of taste exhibited by the Anglo-Saxon ladies. He has not attempted to connect it with the haughty chastity and proud sense of female honour existing in the cradle of chivalry, Scandinavia; but his remarks entirely bear out my theory, or rather, corroborate my deduction from the *sagas* of the North, that the proud and haughty fair one had no need to spread a net to catch a wooer by too much display; she rather sought the appearance of cold indifference, and though scrupulously cleanly, and occasionally grand, was, save in the matter of necklaces, less fine than the men who fought to win her love. When this was once effected, honourable marriage was the result, and to be the faithful, honoured wife of some grand warrior, was the greatest boast of the Scandinavian woman. To gain her love was no easy matter; for, brought up among camps, familiar

with the clang of arms from the cradle, taught from a very early age to dress the wounds of combatants, her ideal of bravery was high. With all their delicacy and poetry, war was the chief source of honour to man, and therefore woman looked to be united to a brave warrior hence, an untried soldier had no chance, while the proudest reward that awaited the champion on his distinguishing himself in arms was the hand of the coy *scene* ("sheen-one", "fair-one"—German, *Schöne*), who would have disdained a maiden sword.

In Scandinavia the peaceful arts were not only neglected, but actually despised. The men held it less noble to gain by the sweat of their brow than by the price of their blood. The smith's art alone was considered respectable, because of the nature of the articles he produced, and his own relationship to Völundr. So also the goldsmith, who, as producing the rewards of merit bestowed so lavishly by the "Distributor of Rings" on his followers, was considered a person entitled to respect, but the agriculturist was regarded with unmitigated contempt, his function was performed by bondsmen and slaves, until the advent of Christianity taught men to abandon piracy and cultivate their fields. Proofs of this are found in our language, which has no word for peasant, which has been stolen from the French. The German *bauer* is he who cultivates; the English boor is only he who dwells on the land. The Swedish, and, in fact, general Scandinavian name for peasant is *bonde*, indicating the dweller, seen also in "*husband*", who is the chief inhabitant of the house. "Thrall", the Scandinavian *tröll*, indicates him who is compelled, *not* free. *Bonde* (from *boa*, "to dwell")

having the sense of dweller in it, is perfectly applicable to a free man, which *tráll* or "thrall" never is. These are the cultivators of the land, the ignoble, though free, living in the house and on the land, and the slave who is in such low slavery as to have no part in the voice of the nation—so abject as to be sold with the land like the Russian serf of thirty years ago. The *paysan* is only the "man of the *pagus*" or country, and the term is neither one of opprobrium nor the reverse, but it is not a Scandinavian word, nor is it English; and we have no peasants, we have farm-labourers. In England the fertility of the soil converted the former Vikings into landowners. True, they did not yet do much more than superintend the work of their thralls, but the result of their prosperity was a decline in nerve and warlike daring. We settled down into agriculturists, became lazy and unwarlike. Ship-building was forgotten; and when Alfred was compelled to face the Scandinavian pirates, who still kept up the *prestige* of the Viking name, his people had so sunk in sloth and ease that he had to send for foreign workmen to build his "long-ships" to defend the country. The Scandinavians were represented chiefly by Danes and Norwegian sea-rovers, who, retaining much of the old Viking spirit, had lost the redeeming virtues of our common ancestors. The Danish invasion infused somewhat of the old spirit into the land, but the English had begun to diverge too widely from the ancient stock to be much benefitted by a new graft, especially as that graft was also much deteriorated, and the new arrivals became as slothful as the older settlers.

The number of buckles preserved in the grave-mounds

of our forefathers would alone prove the popularity of this very necessary article among the Anglo-Saxons. Much of what they wore was of leather; there is strong evidence of a kind of armour of leather being used by them. Shoes are of a very early date, and they appear to have been delicate in form and make. On some of the MSS. there are representations of what at first sight might be taken for the high boots of the seventeenth century. What this was (for I cannot think it possible that the boot could have existed in outward form without having any reference made to it by the *scóp* or *saga-man*), whether it be only a mode of indicating linen encasements of the lower limbs, it is very difficult to say. It is not unlikely to be intended for the linen covering before it has been compressed by the leathern thongs of the full war panoply.

The common mode of giving instruction in schools in the Anglo-Saxon times was by using dialogues, in one of which, speaking of trades, that of the shoemaker is mentioned. A shoemaker is introduced who is made to say: "My craft is very useful and necessary to you. I buy hides and skins and prepare them by my art, and make of them shoes of various kinds, and none of you can winter without my craft. I can make—

Ankle leathers.

Shoes.

Leather hose.

Bottles.

Bridle thongs.

Trappings.

Flasks.

Boiling vessels.

Leather neck-pieces.

Halters.

Wallets.

Pouches."

Whoever has travelled in Russia will have been struck

by the cross-gartering adopted by the peasants to keep the linen wraps well on the limbs. This is common to both sexes, and is found all through the vast empire. The appearance of this portion of the dress is completely Anglo-Saxon, nor can there be much doubt as to its having been in use among all Northern nations; but the Russian form is too rough to be an exact reproduction of the neat and rather dandified arrangement of the Scandinavian-English leggings of the MSS. They are best shown on the check stockings of the Highlander, who, having copied shield and blade, would hardly stop there when there was so clever a leg-guard to copy. And it lives on in those Highland stockings still. The thongs were of leather, ornamented in the case of the Hertog and other chieftains, with gold studs at the points of intersection. The very idea of leathern thongs almost of necessity involves that of buckles; accordingly we find them everywhere. There are small buckles just large enough to secure a narrow thong, like those indicated on the MSS.; and others, again, large enough for a good broad belt. In dresses of state the end of the leathern belt was ornamented with a metal tag, which guarded the point, and ornamented the whole, as is seen in the heraldic garter of the present day. We can call up to the mind's eye the picturesque figure of such a leader, not armed for war, without his byrnie and helm, but in a blue tunic descending not quite to the knee, and bordered with an edge of strongly gilt leather set with jewels; round the waist a leathern strap with gold or bronze buckle, and thong of the same metal; his feet encased in delicate shoes, and his legs wrapped in

white linen, cross-gartered with leathern straps ornamented with gold studs. Round the neck the tunic is bordered with gold and gems, and this is the case with the wide sleeves that reach to his elbow. A blue, or crimson mantle edged with gold, is fastened, with such a brooch as one of those in the British Museum, at the right shoulder to leave the sword-arm free. The sword hangs in a crimson scabbard with cross-garterings of gold. On the head is what Sir Samuel Meyrick calls the Phrygian cap, the prototype of the modern glengarry, in the case of the English warrior, crested with a comb of crimson leather, or perhaps this crest was the edge of the cloth shown in the junction of two pieces to form the garment; and we have before us not the mean figure of a rude savage, but that of a gentleman who thoroughly understands the art of dress, and dresses to perfection.

Among the buckles before us, we have both iron and bronze, clearly showing that both were used by the same people; but of necessity the oxidation of the iron would eat away that metal before the bronze was injured. This will account for more bronze being found than iron in the tombs, and has given rise to the theory of a bronze period preceding an iron age, an idea which is rather hypothetical than historical. It is not surprising, therefore, that so few iron buckles remain in comparison with the number of bronze. It would indeed be strange if we had found more under the circumstances, but if these, now crumbling into dust, had lain another century, there would have arisen the theory that iron buckles were unknown to the Anglo-Saxons; and yet they certainly wrought in both metals, and they wrought uncommonly

well too, for the articles before us would have done credit to a much later age.

The divine character of Völundr naturally raised the blacksmith's art to a respectable position in Scandinavian society, nor did it lose caste on the introduction of Christianity. St. Dunstan was a smith; and, while working at his trade, was tempted by Satan himself, whom the good saint seized by the nose, having previously made his tongs red hot as the most fitting mode of receiving the arch fiend. Accustomed as his Satanic Majesty must have been to warm work, this seems to have been too much for him, for he roared so dismally as to split the rock in which the cave was situated into three pieces. They say that near Bury St. Edmonds the shattered rock still exists, and is pointed out by the country folk in proof of the story. This is history again, for although I am not disposed to contend for the personal appearance on the scene of the arch-enemy, I do believe that Dunstan was a smith, and that the labour of his forge was a legitimate relaxation from his more arduous and more ambitious occupations. Among the results of his industry, he made two great bells for the church at Abingdon. His friend Ethelwald, the bishop, made two other bells for the same place of a smaller size, and a wheel full of small bells, much gilt, to be turned round for its music on feast-days. He also displayed much art in the fabrication of a large silver table of curious workmanship. Stigand, the Bishop of Winchester, made two images and a crucifix, and gilt and placed them in the cathedral of his diocese. One of our kings, finding that a certain monk was a good goldsmith, made an abbot of him. It seems, indeed, ordained

by law that the clergy should be clever workmen. For in one of the laws of Edgar it is said:—"We command that every priest, to increase knowledge, do diligently learn some handicraft." It was at this time proved that handicraft could add value to the material on which it operated and as the increasing wealth of society enabled some to pay for additional cost, as taste for ornament as well as massy value now began to show itself, a demand for skilled work arose.

Bede alludes to their jewellers and goldsmiths. A rich and skilled gold-worker, wishing to do some admirable work, collects, wherever he can, remarkable and precious stones to be placed among the gold and silver, as well to show his skill as for the beauty of the work. "Those precious stones", he continues, "are chiefly of a ruddy or aerial colour." From the custom of kings making presents of rich garments, vases, bracelets, and rings, to their *witena-gemót*, and courtiers, and of great lords doing the same to their knights, the trades for making these must have had much employment.

In the Saxon dialogues the merchant is introduced as being "useful to the king and to the ealdormen, to the rich and to all people". On being asked why, he replies that he brings "a great number of things which this land does not produce". Among these he enumerates "skins, silks, costly gems, and gold; various garments, pigment, wine, oil, ivory, copper and tin, silver, glass, and such like."

Besides this import trade, however, it appears that there was a considerable export trade carried on. English goldsmiths had some fame abroad, especially for their skill in filigree work; and, possibly, this "stippled" work,

of which we have such excellent examples in the British Museum, may have been that which awakened the admiration of continental nations.

When we spoke of the sword and the many considerations which the sight of these relics of ancient weapons awakened, I drew your attention, very briefly, to the ornamented belt or baldrick worn by the Scandinavians, the Anglo-Saxons, the Normans, and the later English. It may not be out of place when considering the buckle, gems, and belt, to refer to its use in conferring knighthood.

Although the Scandinavians, when on piratical and other warlike expeditions, were accustomed to take their women with them, the women so taken were chiefly the wives of the warriors, and the priestesses attached to the band; but of course this did not include the whole female population of a *tún* or province. The younger children were entrusted to the keeping of some ancient sage, whose wisdom and experience made him their fitting guardian. Maidens of a marriageable age were placed under the charge of matrons of good birth, in whose hall they learned the arts of spinning, weaving, and embroidery. But they might easily fall a prey to unscrupulous foes, and, therefore, a guard of honour was left to defend those dear ones against attacks of all descriptions. For this guard only such were chosen as had distinguished themselves in arms already, men in whose faith, honour, and bravery implicit confidence could be placed. Nor would the ladies themselves have cared to own the guardianship of the mere carpet-knight. To those who, like Blount in "*Marmion*", cared more for fighting than any other earthly blessing, to be left on such duty would

have been irksome; nor does it appear ever to have been insisted on against the will of the champion. It was no light sacrifice of self-love to resign the glory of battle, the only real delight then prized, for the duty of sitting still and watching a lady's bower. And, yet, the confidence reposed in these warriors repaid them for their loss. The white shield warrior was not there; the fighting ruffian who had no thought for anything beyond blows and blood, was where he could reap a full harvest of those unsatisfactory *desiderata*. The real gentleman, who could be depended upon for his honour and courtesy to the fair band committed to his charge, and for his soldierly skill in case of stern need, was the character required; and, accordingly, we find him girt with the baldrick, and invested with the gold spurs which proclaimed him a leader *sans peur et sans reproche*. The responsibility was no slight one, and the office was on many accounts one to be shunned by a man whose reputation was not beyond the breath of suspicion; but a hero already tried and so trusted was indeed a person to be envied. To this must be added the grand feeling of adoration for woman as a vehicle for the conveyance of the divine will to man and a docility in her hands as complete as the stubborn resistance to control by other men, and we get an *εἰδωλον* of masculine humanity such as Greece and Rome never dreamt of!

This was the dawn of chivalry; Scandinavia was the cradle of heroes, and in the principles thence put forth, like the drops from Urda's fountain, in the remote past, falling upon the deepest roots of the human tree, they shall cause those roots to take firmer hold, and the

glorious crown of the mighty ash shall burgeon bravely in the heights of Valhalla itself! And those principles held firm hold of the Scandinavian-English mind, for here, on this very ground where we are speaking together, knights were invested with the baldrick a thousand years ago. There are English knights as willing to lay down their lives for the good cause of God and the ladies now, (and this in the very sense of the true olden time when woman was a goddess), as there were a thousand years since, and the English heart beats yet unchilled by Roman art or Norman artifice.

To give you an idea of knighthood in England before the usurpation of the sceptre by the Norman robber, I will give you a translation from *Ingulphus*, made by the indefatigable Sharon Turner from the Latin original, protesting, however, against his retention of the Latin words used by Ingulf, instead of using the English words which the chronicler translates into a sort of Roman slang. The common translation of *thane* by *miles*, as preserved by Sharon Turner, I very strongly object to, and before reading the extract I beg to draw your attention to the true English words given by Alfred in his rendering of Bede's Latin :—

BEDE.	ALFRED.
"alium de militibus.	"otherne cyninges-thegn.
cum his—militibus.	mid his thengum.
milite sub fidelissime.	his thenge-getreosteate.
prefato milite.	foresprecenam his thegne.
comitibus ac militibus.	his geforum, cyninges thegnum.
de militia ejus juvenis."	sum geong thos cyninges-thegn."

The word *cniht* seems to vary in signification, some-

times being decidedly military, sometimes hardly rising above the German *knecht*, an inferior servant. Thane is also at times, and in its very essence, expressive of servitude, and bears that sense exclusively in its German form of *diener*, and in the Swedish *tjener*.

As an instance of chivalric life in the later Anglo-Saxon time, Turner gives the account of Hereward the Saxon and his outlawry by the Normans, from the chronicle of Ingulf:—

“In the reign of Edward the Confessor, Hereward, a noble Anglo-Saxon youth, distinguished himself by his daring valour and eccentricities. As his character is highly romantic, and affords a remarkable instance of the Anglo-Saxon chivalry, I will state the main incidents of his life, from the plain and temperate narration of his contemporary.

“His father was Leofric, Lord of Brunne, in Lincolnshire, a nobleman who had become very illustrious for his warlike exploits. He was a relation of the great Earl of Hereford, who had married the king’s sister.

“Hereward was the son of this Leofric and his wife Ediva. He was tall and handsome, but too warlike, and of an immoderate fierceness of mind. In his juvenile plays and wrestlings he was so ungovernable that his hand was often raised against every one, and every one’s hand against him. When the youths of his age went to wrestling and such other sports, unless he triumphed over all, and his playfellows conceded to him the laurel of victory, he very often extorted by his sword what he could not gain by his muscular strength.

“The youths of his neighbourhood complaining of this

conduct, his father's anger was excited against him. Leofric stated to King Edward the many intolerable tricks that had been practised even upon himself, and his excessive violence to others. Upon this representation the Confessor ordered him into banishment.

"Hereward, thus exiled, went fearlessly to Northumbria, thence to Cornwall, thence to Ireland, and afterwards to Flanders; and everywhere most bravely carrying himself he soon obtained a glorious and magnificent reputation.

"In every danger intrepidly pressing forward and happily escaping; in every military conflict always throwing himself on the bravest and boldly conquering; it was doubtful whether he was more fortunate or brave. His victories over all his enemies were complete, and he escaped harmless from the greatest battles.

"Becoming so illustrious by his military successes, his valiant deeds became known in England, and were sung throughout the country. The dislike of his parent, relatives and friends was changed into the most ardent affection.

"In Flanders he married a noble lady, Turfrida, and had by her a daughter, who lately married an illustrious knight, Lord of Depyng and the paternal inheritance of Brunne and its appurtenances.

"The mother of Turfrida coming to England with her husband, with his permission forsook all earthly pomp, and became a nun in our monastery of Croyland.

"Hereward, returning to his native land with his wife, after great battles and a thousand dangers frequently dared and bravely terminated, as well against the King of England as the earls, barons, prefects, and presidents,

which are yet sung in our streets, and having avenged his mother with his powerful right hand, at length with the King's pardon obtained his paternal inheritance, and ended his days in peace.

"It was in Flanders that Hereward heard of the conquest of England by the Normans, that his father was dead, that the Conqueror had given his inheritance to a Norman, and that his mother's widowhood was afflicted with many injuries and distresses. Transported with grief on this account, he hastened with his wife to England, and collecting a body of her relations he attacked the oppressors of his mother and drove them from her territory."

We now come to the passage which gives us so clear an account of Saxon chivalry.

"Considering then that he was at the head of very brave men, and commanded some *milites* (thanes), and had not yet been legally bound with the belt, according to military custom, he took with him a very few tyros of his cohort, to be legitimately associated with himself to warfare, and went to his uncle, the abbot of Peterborough, named Brand, a very religious man, much given to charity, adorned with all the virtues; and having made confession of his sins, and received absolution, he very urgently prayed that he might be made a legitimate *miles*. For it was the custom of the English, that every one that was to be consecrated to the legitimate *militia* should on the evening previous to the day of his consecration, with contrition and compunction, make a confession of all his sins to a bishop, an abbot, a monk, or some priest; and devoted wholly to prayers, devotions, and mortifications,

should pass the night in the church ; in the next morning he should hear Mass, should offer his sword on the altar, and after the Gospel had been read, the priest having blessed the sword, should place it on the neck of the *miles*, with his benediction. Having communicated at the same Mass, with the sacred mysteries, he would afterwards remain a legitimate *miles*."

He adds that the Normans regarded the custom of consecrating a *miles* as abomination, and did not hold such a one a legitimate *miles*, but reckoned him as one of the slothful *equites*, or of the still more degenerate *quirites*.

From the above account we may form the following deductions :—

First, that a man might take up arms, head warriors, fight with them, and gain much military celebrity, without thereby becoming a legitimate *miles*.

Second, that he could not reputably head *milites*, without being a legitimate *miles*.

Third, that to be a legitimate *miles* was an honorary distinction worthy the ambition of a man who had previously been of such great military celebrity as Hereward.

Fourth, that to be a *miles* an express ceremony of consecration was requisite.

Fifth, that the ceremony consisted of confession and absolution of sins, on the day preceding the consecration of watching in the church all the previous night, with prayers and humiliations ; of hearing Mass next morning ; of offering his sword on the altar ; of its being blessed by the priest ; of its being then placed on his neck ; and of his afterwards communicating. He was then declared a legitimate *miles*.

Sixth, the mode above described was the Anglo-Saxon mode; but there was another in existence after the conquest, for it is expressly mentioned that the Normans did not use, but detested, the custom of religious consecration. But we know that, when the Norman power had burst, like a horrid bubble, we English returned to the custom of our fathers.

Seventh, that a legitimate *miles* was invested with a belt and a sword.

Another passage which alludes to the Anglo-Saxon chivalry will be found in *William of Malmesbury*, in which he declares that Alfred made Athelstan a *miles*. He says, that Alfred, seeing Athelstan to be an elegant youth, prematurely made him a *miles*, investing him with a purple garment, a belt set with gems, and a Saxon sword with a golden sheath.

In every instance, however, the investiture of the belt is alluded to.

Having ladies and knights among my audience, I need not, like a poor preacher, tamely insist upon the strict accordance of my discourse with my text. Our subject divides itself into two heads and an application; the brooch and buckle are the heads. The greatest gem we own is priceless woman, who is our brooch; the buckle is the means of holding the sword that shall guard her—even as Truth guards Love; and is the fitting emblem of English manhood, serving as knight the prophetess and queen.

LECTURE V.

THE RING.

OF all the words of our ill-used mother tongue living on our lips to-day, there are few of such simple meaning and yet complicated bearing as the ring. We all know what a ring is—there is nothing more easy than to call up the form of a ring when we hear the sound of the word. Any schoolboy, any child not yet admitted to the threshold of learning, knows the simple form called a *ring*. And yet there are very few men, or women either, who could explain to us all the differences that have arisen, in the course of history, in the outward appearance of the little circlet. How many are there who could explain all the mystic symbolisation, all the mythological values in various parts of the world, and all the superstitions connected with the ring?

One of the earliest symbolisations on record in the far-off times just before the dawn of history, when the thought of the mind was pictured by some physical object with which it stood in mystic connection, was the ring. But in considering its mythological value we shall find quite enough matter—in fact much more than we can discuss in the space of one lecture—in the stories of this mystic symbol in the mythology of our race.

The word itself is pure Teutonic. In our own Anglo-Saxon and in Icelandic we have it as *hring*; in German it appears without the aspirate as *ring*. Cognate with *hring* appears *kring* in Scandinavian words, meaning "round about". *Kringel* in German is a cake of wheaten flour in a ring form. The universe in Old Scandinavian is called the *heimskringsla*, and this is the name of one of the classic books of Northern saga-lore.

The universe is held together by a living ring, called the *midgárd* serpent, which is one of the monstrous brood of Loki and the Giantess of the "Iron-wood", cast by the gods into ocean, where he will remain until Ragnarök—the end of the world—properly the twilight of the gods—holding his tail in his mouth to form a ring. The grand gift of a king to his vassal, or from any chief to his ship, was a ring. The reward of bravery was a gold arm-ring of no light weight, while the ring for the stem of the war-ship seems to have been of bronze gilt. The very armour that protected the champion was made of rings; the helmet was a ring supporting two others; while the royal crown and noble coronet were both of them at first mere plain rings.

When considering the subject of the spear, I took occasion to call your attention to the circumstance of the "Danes" in *Beowulf* being called *Gár-dene*, an expression identifying the warrior with his weapon. In the same poem allusion is made to the *Hring-dene*, or Ring-Danes, from the chain armour which they wore, or, as some believe, from the arm-rings with which they were adorned. And as these are certainly the most prominent forms and uses of rings throughout the North, it will be

as well for us to commence our study to-day with them and first, I propose to consider the rings of which the chief defence in the early Middle Ages was made. The byrnie, or, as it was subsequently styled, the hauberk, of the Scandinavians, English, and Germans, was a peculiar kind of armour formed of innumerable small rings linked together so as to form a regular net work of chain. This kind of armour is still in use in many parts of India, where customs of very remote antiquity are faithfully preserved in modern usage. Here the mode of linking the little rings together so closely as to form a fabric like a sort of iron cloth (of which garments can be made, as flexible as cloth, but as impenetrable as iron plates) can be studied with advantage. We can see the different patterns produced by different workers in chain. Sometimes they seem to have been arranged so as to fall into horizontal rows; another pattern represents longitudinal stripes; another was produced by working in coloured rings, so as to obtain a pattern of lozenges of different hues from the body of the garment. There are some Oriental suits in which rings of gold have been woven in with the iron, and this invariably in a lozenge form. A number of rings no larger than those of the steel purses of our time, only not split as they are, were connected together and riveted so as to form one substantial piece of iron cloth, and we find smaller pieces of another metal worked up into a lozenge shape of about an inch and a half on each side, and let into the larger piece forming the garment. This explains the phenomenon of the masled armour of Meyrick, who tries to show that the pattern I have just alluded to was made of small

lozenge-shape pieces of steel, sown on cloth or elk skin. Of such armour ever having been worn, there is absolutely no proof whatever. In a former lecture I pointed out the erroneous view taken by Meyrick on a similar question, and showed that what he considered to be armour, indicated by the Saxon expression *Ring-mæl*, was really a weapon, and in the same way I believe that I may be able to convince my audience that this masled armour was only an armour of rings.

When we turn to the great well-spring of our knowledge on Anglo-Saxon subjects, *Beowulf*, we find the armour borne by the warriors described as the "war-net", the "ring-byrnie", and by other expressions, all indicating a weaving of rings by the smith, a riveting by the hand, a net of chain, but no allusion whatever to such small pieces of plate as imagined by Meyrick. In his *Critical Inquiry into Antient Arms and Armour* he gives, among his gorgeous plates, one representing Danish warriors in armour, marked by lines diagonally crossing each other, giving the whole garment the appearance of a net. Our author not being able to see the rings of the armour, calls these figures specimens of the new masled armour which he invents to fit them. The fact is, however, that this picture of the "Ring Danes" is only drawn in accordance with the Scandinavian poetical name for the ring-byrnie, the "war-net". If the appearance of the Vikings' armour justified the appellation of "net", it is to be expected that the delineations of it would resemble network; accordingly, so net-like is it that Meyrick calls it "*masled*", "from its resemblance to the meshes of a net." Here he should have stopped, or have gone further in

another direction, and have connected the net-like form of the armour worn by these "Ring-danes" with the net in *Beowulf* described as formed of rings. But he went further in the wrong direction, and invented little plates which he calls "mascles", from a much later word used in mediæval heraldry to denote a lozenge shape, resembling a mesh. The word is immediately derived from the Old French, *mascle*; French, *macle*; Latin, *macula*, a spot—the mesh of a net. All this curious story of a fabulous kind of armour, which never was historical, is the result of our not being taught to search in our own wealth-hoards for a missing link, but immediately to fly off to foreign aids, like French and Latin, which accordingly lead us into grave errors. If these two Danish warriors had been the only figures with indications of net-like armour, it would have been careless in Meyrick, to say the least of it; to form a mere hypothesis to account for the appearance of this kind of armour, instead of investigating it more fully; but it is very often found in Norman and Anglo-Saxon pictures. It was, therefore, very common, but not a word is said in the sagas, myths, or chronicles of such armour as that extemporised by Meyrick. In fact, these pictures are nothing more than the representations of the pattern in chain mail to which I have already referred as being so commonly found on Oriental suits. The armoured figures, displaying the rings entire, for which kind of armour Meyrick invented another name and classification, are meant to show simply a special pattern, in which the little rings are not set so thickly together; they are larger in size and differently arranged, but both are representations of chain-mail. To Meyrick's

blunder regarding "ring-mail" I have already alluded in the lecture on the sword, where I also endeavoured to show that what he calls "ring-mail" was only another way of delineating chain-mail, and that Meyrick's theories, due to his knowing more Latin than Anglo-Saxon, were unfounded and misleading in the highest degree.

Before the commencement of the Christian era, before Cæsar invaded Britain, the Germans and Scandinavians wore chain mail. Nay, I am more inclined to refer the expression "Ring-Dane" to the armour thus made, than to the custom of wearing rings or bracelets of gold on the arm. My reason is simply that the name for arm-ring was *beáh*, and we never meet the expression *Beáh-Dane*, which might have appeared had the name been taken from the bracelet. Essentially warlike, the Scandinavians would be more likely to become identified with their arms and armour than with any other portion of their belongings. The expression *gár-dane* is known to exist, and it explains its own existence; reasoning from analogy, it is not improbable that the "Ring-Dane" is the Dane armoured, while the *gár-dane* is the same warrior armed. We are referred to countless ages in the past when we investigate Indian arms and armour. They are the same now that they were, not hundreds, but thousands of years ago; and when we reflect that India was the cradle of our race, the birth-place of arms, language, and art, we are struck by the self-evident fact that when we came from the "East", we brought our language and our clothes with us. There is absolutely no more ground for supposing that chain armour was first introduced into Europe by the Saracens, and copied from them by the Crusaders,

than there would be for the assertion that these Saracens taught us to speak. Chain mail is Aryan as well as Semitic, and was brought from the seat of the Aryans with that wave of population surging westward in pre-historic times, as it surges westwards now. The natural and most readily-formed guard against the arrow, javelin, and the sword, is the linked mail of the sons of Odin. And, as the historical Odin (who is, however, far more shadowy than his mythological namesake, being a mere fiction) is said to have come with his warriors from the East, bringing arms, art, and language with him, we can see how the early teachings of the truth became crystalised into the legend of the historic Odin. The original thought is, that man owes all he possesses to Odin as the all-wise, the dispenser of good to man, the giver of *rings*; the secondary thought is, that some leader, marching from the East, was an *avatar* of Odin, who caused the chosen band of "ringed" warriors to migrate to the North. Placing the *idea* of the historic Odin at 100 B.C., and granting his warriors to have been mail-clad men, we obtain an historic period of nearly fifteen hundred years, during which chain mail was the chief element in armour. Plate armour was introduced very gradually in the thirteenth century, but no whole suits were worn until the beginning of the fifteenth, and they were discontinued in the seventeenth. So that the ring held longer sway over us than the plate. Even at the time when plate-armour was worn in greatest perfection, from the reign of Henry the Sixth to that of Henry the Eighth, chain-mail was used to supplement the rigid steel. Gussets under the arm-pits, a skirt from the waist to the

middle of the thigh, continued to be used, and not infrequently a whole hauberk, or shirt of mail, was worn under the panoply of steel. We may say that from the earliest period of the dawn of our history, down to a time not very remote, our armour has been formed of rings. If we take the date ascribed to the coming of Odin from the East, as the commencement of the epoch, and reckon to the introduction of portions of plate-armour in the thirteenth century, we obtain a period which may be designated as the "Age of the Ring", extending over fourteen centuries.

Of this age, the time just before our invasion of Britain down to the establishment of Christianity amongst us, may be considered the maturity. Rings were the fetters that bound inferior chiefs to their lord. Princes and *Heretoga* entered the service of very small kinglets for the sake of the bracelets they received. The great "Scyld", founder of the family to which Beowulf belonged, is described as *beaga-bryttan*, "the dispenser of rings". The lord of Heorot, whose mansion was the scene of the terrible visits of the Grendel, is spoken of as having great power and as not belying his promise—"bracelets he distributed." Another hero is described as owning a burgh and rings. The Hall of Heorot is described, after the fall of the Grendel, as *beah-sele beorhta*, "the bright hall of rings". The collar, or gorget, of gold, is also called the *beah*, or ring. We find it of bronze and also of silver gilt. They are called twisted gold in *Beowulf*. Besides which, there is a notice in some of the dialogues that the shoemaker claims to supply men with leather neck-pieces. These may have been the gilt-collars to which allusion is

so frequently made in the sagas, but there is nothing more explicit to throw light on the subject.

The technical expression for bracelet was *beðh*, from the verb *bugan*, "to bow" or "bend", existing in the modern words, "bough", as part of a tree, and in "bow", to bend; and metal bent into a ring form was so called, especially when used for ornament. Hence necklaces, bracelets, neck-rings, garlands, and crowns were all termed *beðh*. The lord who rewarded his knights with gifts of gold rings was called *beáh-gifa*; a treasury was called *beáh-hórd*, "a ring hoard". A warrior well adorned with costly rings was said to be *beáh-broden*, "adorned with bracelets"; *beáh-sel*, or *beáh-selu*, was a "ring", "hall", "a palace"; *beáhþegu* is "ring service", that is, such service as is rendered for reward; *beðh-wriðaða* is "leader", literally *ring-leader*, a prince.

These expressions show that rings were received in payment for service by the earlier Scandinavian English. We know that they had no coin before their conquest of Britain, and that their payments were, like those of the earlier Romans, made in cattle. The Roman name for money was *pecunia*, from *pecus*, "cattle", and our payment of professional men is called the "fee", from the Anglo-Saxon word *feoh*, "cattle", now living in the German *vieh* (pronounced fee).

We know that the Saxons, Angles, Danes, Jutes and other Scandinavians visited Britain long before they ever thought of conquest. Some metals—perhaps tin—they obtained from the island long before we have any history of Britain. *And Cæsar found their money in Britain!* The Kelts were known to have copied Roman money in

later times, and they copied the Scandinavian rings then. Cæsar, speaking of the Britons says : “ *Utuntur aut ære aut annulis ferris ad certum pondus examinatus pro nummo*. There is another reading which gives *taleis ferreis*, bars or rods, and this may be the right one after all. The copper coins, which were found by the Romans in Britain, were taken from the Gauls. Why should not the rings have been taken from the Scandinavians, whose special invention they were. The prized ornaments of the Danish pirates in the ninth century, while they were yet pagans, were their bracelets, on which, as well as on their swords, they swore. They inherited the love and reverence for these marks of distinction and military pride from their very remote ancestors, who “distributed rings” as much as the pagan English earls, with whom it was a decided *culte*. The Britons were copyists—the Scandinavians were not. The Scandinavian chiefs bound their thanes, or servants, to them by the gifts of rings from time immemorial, nor was it until they had been some time settled in Britain that actual coin was used ; and the early English coins are clumsy, the portraits rude, and the shape untrue, as might be expected among people adopting a foreign custom for the first time.

But whether the Scandinavians took the idea of ring-money from the Britons, or the Britons borrowed it from the Scandinavians, one thing is certain, namely, that before the English conquered the island, rings were the reward of service ; and this, of course, is the same thing as saying that ring-money was current. For when we are told of the distribution of rings by the great earls to their retainers, it is not absolutely indicated that the rings so

given away were all big bracelets of gold. In fact, it is hardly conceivable that they were such. Bronze was largely used instead, and I make no doubt that some of the smaller bronze rings in this collection were used as money.

Finger rings were worn at a very early period, and these were of gold, silver, bronze, iron, and even of stone. Sometimes they are found with Runic inscriptions, sometimes they are quite plain; but there is every reason to believe also that the arm-ring or bracelet preceded the finger ornament among the Scandinavians proper. The Anglo-Saxons, as a branch of the great Teutonic family, seem to have given greater prominence to the bracelet than to the finger-ring. Aldhelm, speaking of the dress of a married woman in the eighth century, speaks first of her necklaces and bracelets, and adds, "She had also rings with gems on her fingers." In the vocabulary of Alfric we find the bracelet alluded to as *beáh*, but the anellus is called a "*lytel hring*." Ear-rings are called "ear-rings" and "ear-preons". Finger-rings were employed on very solemn occasions, and in the account of the coronation of Ethelred the Second, after the various parts of the ceremony have been related in full, we are told of the coronation of his queen, and this is said to have been performed in the following way: "She was anointed, and after a prayer a ring was given her, and then she was also crowned."

In the times before our conquest of this island, I think I am justified in saying that the finger-ring was less prized than the bracelet. Firstly, because it was too small to be of such estimation in the eyes of our forefathers as the more substantial arm-ring. If we, in these days, had gold

coins of the value of ten guineas, there are few true Englishmen who would not prefer them, despite their unwieldly size, to the more delicate and portable half-sovereign. Secondly, they loved adornment on their rings, and, of course, the bigger the ring was the greater the opportunity for introducing ornament. Gems could be introduced, and, of course, "the more the merrier." They expected to be rewarded for their brave deeds, and saw in a good thick, broad gold bracelet a tolerably substantial mark of their leader's approbation. Thirdly, they were not unlike the youth of our own time, fond of display; and this passion could be more decidedly gratified by having large hoops of gold on the arm, than in wearing a miniature ring on the finger. They were large men in bulk, in heart, and thought; very earnest, very thorough, very rough, and yet with a capacity for poetry and abstract thought for which we are hardly prepared. And we find all these qualities expressed in the bracelet, which consisted of rough beaten gold, the pure metal sterling ore through and through alike; huge in size, but set with costly gems.

Before the advent of Christianity the Saxons and Danes were wont occasionally, in times of very great peril at sea, to sacrifice a huge arm-ring to Rana, goddess of the deep. They argued that if they were drowned the ring would be useless, as the wearer would, by dying so peaceful a death, lose his claim on Valhalla; therefore it was judicious to conciliate Rana, for if he went to her he was then sure of good treatment, and if she, appeased by the offering, relinquished her hold, and allowed him to reach the land in safety, then all that was to be done was to gain fresh

rings and go to Valhalla later on, when furnished with that indispensable portion of the outfit.

Mention having been made of the gems with which the belt, ring, helmet, sword, shield, garments, and brooches were inlaid, it will be appropriate to tell you in this place what is known of the Anglo-Saxon gems, or rather, what *they* knew about precious stones.

They were acquainted, according to a MS. in the British Museum, distinguished as Tiberius A. 3, with twelve sorts of precious stones, and these are named and described in the following manner and order: —

“The first gem kind is black and green, which are both mingled together, and this is called *giaspis*. The other is *saphyrus*; this is like the sun, and in it appear like golden stars. The third is *calcedonius*; this is like a burning candle. *Smaragdus* is very green; *sardonix* is likest blood; *onichimus* is brown and yellow; *sardius* is like clear blood; *berillius* is like water; *crisoprassus* is like a green leek, and green stars seem to shine from it; *topazius* is like gold, and *carbunculus* is like burning fire.”

This enumeration betrays the Christian scribe, but it is remarkable that the ancient doctrine of numbers, the “*Zahl-lehre*” of the Germans, teach us that the number twelve indicates what is complete or full; hence the twelve gods in Valhalla, and their twelve houses or mansions. For them the year had twelve months, while the Romans had but ten, and they reckoned by dozens as well as by tens. The idea of a precious stone gives an image of Divine truth in all ancient thought; and thus, in their having twelve ornamental gems, we are forcibly reminded

of the wonderful construction of Aaron's breastplate which was of course symbolical, like all the mysterious ordinances commanded to the Jews.

That the ring is emblematical is known to everybody. It is the fitting type of eternity, of fate, and many other solemn things, and its use was great among the Scandinavians as a teacher of hidden thought. The universe, or rather the *Middangárd*, as I have already said, was bounded by a ring. The Midgárd's-serpent formed this ring, and Odin was essentially the god of rings. True to this interior or higher veneration for the ring-form, the great circles of stone where judgment was given were called the "doom-rings". There was a central group of three stones, two upright, and one placed across to form a horizontal slab, and round this centre were grouped the rings of mighty stone, which formed the roofless temple and the palace of *tings*. All through the North we find them, but in England, on Salisbury plain, perhaps the proudest relic of our Pagan sires yet remains. Ignorant conjecture, a desire to ascribe everything weird and inconceivable in the island to the Druids, has led many to consider these grand remains specimens of British art. I am certain that had I claimed them as English some forty years ago, I should have been laughed down. The fact of their Scandinavian origin is now hardly a matter of doubt. One of the most imposing ceremonies connected with these doom-rings was the exhibition by the priest-chieftain of a massive silver ring, he himself being clad in the purest white. The silver denoted truth, as gold denoted love, and the white garb the spotless nature of the office of priestly magistrate or *godi*. Near this *Ting-*

stead was a sort of minor temple of wood and stone, in which the vestments and the various articles required in the rites could be kept. From this *tempel-hús* the priest-chief would issue with the emblematical ring raised in his hand. The victim was slaughtered, and with the ring still raised on high to Odin in one hand, the priest would sprinkle the judgment-seat with the blood so dear to the god of battles, chaunting his inaugural discourse. Here we have ring after ring crowding upon us. The great circle of the horizon, the *heimskringla*, all around, the shield of Odin with its ring of gold blazing in the heavens, the ring-stones of doom and punishment, the symbol-ring in the hand of the priest, the ringed helmets, the mighty bracelets of the partakers in the rite—we are overwhelmed with the conviction that our forefathers were, of all poetical and imaginative people, the most thorough-going and the most consistent. Deeply convinced of the truth of the eternal existence of the soul, eternity was ever in their thoughts, and the symbol of eternity and mystery was as uninterruptedly presented to their gaze. They were what we should call cruel, because they lived in a fighting age; they thought it shame to show emotion under their own physical sufferings, and despised such as let a groan escape under any kind of torture. So the victim on the *blótsten* was half slain, and the augury read from the quivering entrails. But they thought they served their god in doing this, and so they served him honestly.

Such a grand ring-meeting for great cases of the crown took place but once a year. The spring, or *vár*, was the time appointed before the warriors started in

their dragon ships in quest of foreign gold, and the three great *góðar*—so they called the judges—met all together on this solemn day. Each had his twelve stern dooms-men there to form his court. And these twelve dooms-men, are they dead or not? They meet in this same island, as they met in Denmark just two thousand years ago. The three great judges sitting *in banco* have a weird and awful look when viewed through the dust of so many ages, but they are all the dearer to me for being Teutons, without a drop of Roman blood among them. And there is something very fine in the idea of each judge having his own twelve jurymen attending; thus the court is multiplied by the mystic three, and the jury is raised to three times the strength of ordinary cases. And then—in that old time, as now in this our nineteenth century—if any plaintiff or defendant saw a face which he distrusted among the doomsmen met to try his cause, he might at once appeal, and then the *góði* who had named that man must take his place and let him go at once.

To make the ring secure great ropes were drawn all round outside the outer stones, or if there were no stones, this outer ring was marked by hazel rods, to which the ropes were tied. In Eigil's Saga we are given a most dramatic tale of such a court of law. A Ting in Norway is described, in which from each of three divisions of the land, or districts, twelve doomsmen are sent; so there are thirty-six to form the court. The doom-ring now is formed by hazel rods set up in due array to mark the mystic ring. To each one of these hazel rods the rope is stretched with care, and thus a circle formed. But Queen Gunhilda at the Ting, fearing the "doom" would be pro-

nounced for Eigils, and against her cause, made one of her retainers cut the rope, and this broke up the court. The ring was broken and the court profaned.

The swearing of this court of law was done upon the Ring. (Did not the Danes in England vow *on their rings* to Alfred not to vex his land until a day that he had set was past ?) The priestly chief presents the silver ring to judge and doomsmen all alike, and each must swear a solemn oath upon the silver ring. The plaintiff, the defendant, and the witnesses, all swear to give truth in evidence; the judge and the doomsmen swear to judge with equity. The oath is taken on the ring, but in the names of Frey and Njörd and the Almighty God, by each that he shall well fulfil the task he has assumed as plaintiff or defendant—doomsman, witness, judge, and all purgators too—to speak the truth and help the right conscientiously and well. The term Almighty God applied in Iceland and in Norway to Thor; in Sweden and in Denmark Odin would be meant.

When we considered the teachings of the sword, I referred to that weapon as the chief medium for oaths; but the Scandinavians made a great difference between military and civil oaths. Military affairs were sworn to on the sword, while civil matters were decided on the ring. Hence, when Alfred made the Danes swear peace to him upon their bracelets, they had no hesitation in breaking the oath, because it ought to have been on the sword. A civil oath on the sword would not be binding any more than a military oath on a ring. So the Danes took the money and laughed at the simple English, who, in becoming Christians, had forgotten the niceties, and “quips and

quiddities" of pagan jurisprudence, because, of course, among Christian lawyers anything like such refined subtlety would never occur; so that in tracing many of our customs back to Paganism, we are glad to find this bad habit of legal quibbling lost in the dark ages.

While on the subject of mystic rings, I cannot refrain from alluding to the story of the sorceress Thorgerd Hördabrud in the *Færeyinga* saga.

When Sigmund Brestusson was ready to sail on his expedition to the *Færoe* Islands, he went to Jarl Hakon, who asked him in whom he put his trust. "I put my trust in my own might and main", replied Sigmund. Hakon told him that he was wrong to do this; that he should rather put his trust in Thorgerd Hördabrud. "In her", he added, "I have always placed my faith, and I will now lead thee to her." The Jarl then took Sigmund into a forest, in which they had not proceeded far before they came to a house with glass windows, and Sigmund remarked that the interior was ornamented with gold and silver, and a number of images of the Scandinavian divinities. At the entrance stood a woman attired in very costly apparel, before whose feet Hakon instantly prostrated himself, and remained for some time in that attitude. On rising he told Sigmund that they must gain the favour of this woman, who was no other than Thorgerd Hördabrud herself, by placing silver on a stool that stood before her, a kind of offering which was no doubt the most likely of all others to render her propitious.

"It will be a sign", said the Jarl, "that she listens to my prayer when she lets go the ring she holds in her

hand, and that ring will bring thee good fortune, Sigmund."

Hakon then began to pull at the ring; but the more he pulled the faster she held it. He then prostrated himself at her feet a second time, and burst into tears. On rising, he again pulled at the ring with all his force, and Thorgerd at length quitting her hold, he obtained possession of it, and returned home highly pleased that he was thus able to give Sigmund a charm that would preserve him from danger, and ensure his future welfare.

This is most instructive to us, as showing the awe which such a sorceress as Thorgerd was able to inspire in the minds of such valiant chiefs as Earl Hakon and Sigmund.

I have mentioned the fact of a symbolic or mystic meaning attached to the ring. This is found in all ancient teachings, but among the Scandinavians this form seems to have entered into the very life of the nation, so much that they held dear was connected with it. Nor was it confined merely to substantives, there is the verb "to ring", meaning to place in a circle, also to "sound round", in a clear, metallic way. Thus the serpent rings mid-earth, and the sword rings as it leaves the scabbard. From the verb "to ring" we find another substantive arise, and we talk of the ring of metal, the true ring of poetry, and so forth.

The idea expressed by the gift of a ring, all through Scandinavian paganism, is that of reward, distinction, and to some extent, perhaps, a pledge. This became more definite in a later age than that immediately before us, when it became the sign of the marriage covenant and the

married state. The verb "to wed" means simply to give a solemn promise, to pledge the word to do something; thus, to pledge a horse or any other property was to "wed". With this, too, the German *wetten* is cognate. In the old time, before Christianity had reached us, the marriage ceremony consisted chiefly in the interchange of presents, grand feasting on the part of assembled friends, the consumption of the great loaf made by the bride as an initiation into the further mysteries of housekeeping, and, of course, the ancestor of our wedding-cake. In honour of the bride the Anglo-Saxons brewed some special barrels of beer, which was called the "bride-ale", hence our modern word *bridal*. This beer was drank to her health and to that of the bridegroom (originally *brydgumma*, "bridesman"). The Anglo-Saxons paid a regular sum, agreed upon beforehand, to the father before the wedding. In Scandinavia, the bridegroom, having obtained the maiden's consent, together with that of her parents and guardians, appointed the day; and, having assembled his own relations and friends, sent some of them to receive in his name the bride and her portion from her father. The friends who were sent to fetch the lady were answerable for the charge that was committed to them, and if they abused their trust the law amerced them in a sum treble that which was paid for murder. The father, or some one *in loco parentis*, attended on the young lady, bringing her to her new home, and there she was solemnly given over into the hands of the husband. After this the newly married pair sat down to table with their guests, who drank deeply to the healths of the gods and goddesses, and to their host and hostess. The bride was then

taken up and carried on men's shoulders (a custom to which I have before alluded when speaking of the election of a king). She was so carried through the house and the grounds immediately belonging to it, and then presented to the husband, who was awaiting her in the nuptial chamber. Here he wrote the Rune *nyd*, representing a knot, upon her finger nail, and this was the marriage tie. Before her were borne innumerable lights, and the bridal chamber was brilliantly illuminated, to show that the brightest part of their lives had come, and was still coming. The next morning the husband gave the wife several typical presents, among which were—a pair of oxen for the plough, a horse fully harnessed, a sword, a shield, and a lance. The wife on her part gave the husband a complete military outfit. The gift to the wife signified that she was not to lead a lazy, slothful life, but to aid him in every way and follow him to the field. Her gift was a sign that he was the champion of the home. The yoked oxen, the caparisoned horse, and the arms, all served to instruct the women how they were to live, and how life might be terminated. The arms were to be carefully preserved, and being ennobled by the use made of them by the man, were to be consigned, as portions, to their daughters, and to be handed down to posterity.

The Anglo-Saxon customs were similar. The consent of the lady being first obtained, the bridegroom then gave his promise and his "wed" to the person who spoke for her, that he desired to make her his wife. "Nor", adds Sharon Turner, from whom I quote, "was this promise trusted to his own honour merely, or to his

own interest. The female sex was so much under the protection of the law, that the bridegroom was compelled to produce friends who became security for his due observance of his covenant. In this we have the origin of "groomsman", or "best-man" of our time. The parties being betrothed, the next step to take was to settle by whom the *foster leán*, or money requisite for the care of the children, was to be supplied. The bridegroom pledged himself to do this; his friends became security for him.

These preliminaries being arranged, he had to signify what he meant to give her for choosing to be his wife, and what he should give her in case she survived him. This was the *morgen gifu*, being given by the Anglo-Saxon husbands to their wives on the morning after the wedding. The old law says that it is right that she should halve the property, or the whole of it should become hers if they had children, unless she married again.

The friends of the bridegroom became sureties for his good conduct, and those of the bride of hers. A mass-priest blessed the union; and after many points of law had been settled for the protection of the wife under all possible circumstances, "her relations wedded her to him."

In all these institutions there is no mention of the marriage-ring, which came in later. The Germans and Swedes represent all these various presents interchanged between man and wife on the day of the wedding, by exchanging the rings worn by the parties. The English, regarding the wife in her capacity of "home-ruler", or queen of the household, placed a ring upon her finger, not as a badge of servitude, but as a sort of coronation, as we

have seen the consort of Ethelred the Second, before receiving the crown, anointed and distinguished by a ring being placed on her finger.

The ring, when a badge of servitude, was made of iron and was worn round the neck of the thrall, as may be seen on consulting Strutt's interesting book already alluded to. But a gold ring round the neck, or a necklace, was as great a distinction as the iron ring was a degradation. We meet with allusions to the neck-ring, as well as to the arm-ring, all through *Beowulf*, worn as a proud distinction; but, if the older form were like the silver gilt specimen preserved in the British Museum as an example of later Saxon work, the ornament was not an entire ring, but a large segment of a circle, thicker at the lower part than at the extremities, which were joined by fine chains. From this *beróst beáh* the Britons copied a similar ornament, for it was not used by the Romans; *we* never copied the Britons, and when Cæsar came to this island he found the savage inhabitants without clothing, tattooed and dyed with woad for ornament, reminding one of the celebrated lines :—

“A painted vest Prince Vortigern had on,
Which from a naked Pict his grandsire won.”

Grand old men were the Teutons who humbled Rome, in every sense of the term, who spread over the face of the earth that love of freedom, law, and morality which has come down to us as a sacred heritage, unpolluted by the moral corruptions which sprang from the lair of the she-wolf's litter! Grand they were in their supreme contempt of meanness, their simple faith in “that great God who made the sun”, and in their unaffected love of

sumptuous adornment! This has come down also to us. Our military dress is something tremendous at times, and the "torque", or *hals-beáh*, lived till a few years ago in the golden gorget of our infantry officers.

We now come to the use of rings on board ship. We know that there are many uses for them in modern ship-building. Ring bolts and other nautical terms are familiar to all readers of Marryat, to say nothing of those

" Whose hearts have tried,
And danced in triumph o'er the waters wide."

But we never call a ship a ring-stem under present circumstances. This was the regular appellation of the Viking ship, and was applied on account of the rings on the prow; a subject that requires some special examination. I have before compared the Viking ship to a large canoe with a regular keel. The side-planks or wales of the ship were continued to the stem, to which they were fastened by nails, and further secured by iron rings passed over the head of the stem, and then forced down over the ends of the planks, which had been tapered so as to admit of lying in a group round the stem, which, however, was continued much higher than the bows, and finished off with the head of a dragon or of a horse. It is said that when such a dragon had done good service, after victory the Viking would add the reward of gold rings passed over the high stem, in addition to the less brilliant iron rings already doing duty. Of course, this must be received with some caution. There was a great quantity of gold consumed in the adornment of the persons of these terrible dandies; but when it comes to ship-building with rings big enough to form the shoe for the rudder of a first-

rate man-of-war, the mind is rather disposed to admire the lavish genius of the saga-man or *scôp* than to swallow such a sea-necklace whole. My own conviction is that these nautical decorations were, like the preons before us in these glass cases, of *bronze*. Certainly the boss of the shield was of this metal, and we so constantly meet with references to the gold rim, gold eye, and golden adornments of the shield in general, but finding so many really of bronze, it seems a fair inference that the poet drew on his imagination for this fact in those cases where the golden prow is spoken of. Possibly, and very probably, these good-conduct rings, like the figure-head itself, were gilt, as our own figure-head is (or was some time ago), and then the expression "gold" is well accounted for. This may have been the case, too, with some of the bracelets worn by the warriors, who could hardly have been supplied all through with such tremendous solid gold bracelets as we are led to imagine they actually wore.

True sons of Odin, we wear gold bracelets now to mark the military status of our hero-tars. The lieutenant wears one, the commander two, the post-captain three such gold rings on his arm to mark his rank to-day. And here again these rings, or "bangles", if you please, are not solid gold bracelets, they are gold lace distinctions sewn round the cuff of the uniform, and are to all intents and purposes the modern form of the *earm-beáh* of the fifth century, distributed for the purpose of showing how the Ocean Yar! stands in the eyes of his Viking crew. Some years ago a gold band was worn round the undress caps of our sons of the waves, to show their rank as officers; which is precisely analogous to the gold ring round the

helmet of the noble in the infancy of our race. And this essential adornment of those grim "infants", I intend to notice a little more in detail.

The original head-covering of the Scandinavians was not metallic. They wore leather caps on their heads, very similar in shape to those Scotch caps which we call "glengarries". To strengthen these the ring was pressed into the service and fixed as a rim round the lower part. As this ring was worn broader and broader in succeeding ages, the cylindrical helmet was produced. The wealthier sort wore iron rings as indicated, while the poorer were content to wear the hardened leather alone, for we find in *Alfric's Glossary* of the tenth century, a distinction made between them. *Galea* is translated "leþer helm", *cassis*, "iren helm", and *corona vel diadema*, "cyne-helm". As we have no more definite allusion to the actual fabrication of iron helmets, or to their use, and as the MSS. give representations which certainly agree rather with the idea of leathern caps strengthened by iron hoops, I am inclined to the belief that the leather helmet is the combed cap, and the iron helmet that cap protected by hoops. The helmet of the Saxons boasted no very broad rim; but it had affixed to it two half-rings crossing each other at a point just above the centre of the ring which formed the base and rim of the whole. Sometimes over this iron frame the head of some forest beast was drawn, but generally, even when this was not the case, the jaws of the boar or bear were affixed to the lower rim, so as to protect the ears, after the fashion of the "casque" of the seventeenth century, the *oreillets* of which were reproductions of the boar's-jaws of the third.

The distinctive mark was a gold band round this cap ; and so we have three kinds of distinctive helmets. Those with a narrow gold band, marked the thane, subsequently translated into baron ; those with a broader gold border were the jarls (yarls, iarls, or eorls, the pronunciation is the same, the variations being only orthographical, resulting from the nationality of the writer), translated in after days into *comes*, *comites*, counts. We retain the northern "Earl", the grandest word, next to queen, wife, and mother in the language. Strange that the wife of our jarl should be a Frenchwoman, Madame la Comtesse ! The earl's coronet at the present day is only a golden ring with certain decorations superadded ; but the base of the coronet is the Scandinavian helmet, as the name of the rank is as Scandinavian with us as ever it was. Now comes the helmet of the king, and this, too, was furnished with a broad gold hoop, with two other half-rings rising from it. In this case these two perpendicular rings were also of gold, but the cyne-helm, *kunungs-hjelm*, *königs-helm*, was in the North distinguished by having small triangular pieces of gold fixed to the upper rim of the supporting band or hoop. In England, they seem to have adopted the scroll already, into which they ran so frantically in their subsequent progress in art, for we find devices something similar to the *fleur-de-lys* inserted between the perpendicular hoops to mark the kingly dignity. Remember, the proper English word for crown (which we have no right to use) is cyne-helm, and bear in mind that this compound signifies "the protector of the race"; then reflect whether it be a barbarous expression of which we ought to be ashamed or not. Look at

the king's-helm of England worn to-day, and you will see the Saxon hoops, filled in with velvet, and adorned with gems; but the same idea, nay, the same form expressing that idea, adorning the beloved head of our queenly mistress, that might have pressed the brows of the first Bretwalder of England. So these things are English, Saxon, Scandinavian, clearly our own, and existing *only* in England, for there is no other country in Europe where any crown, except that on the royal head is worn! There are no coronets worn actually save with us. In other countries you find them as heraldic bearings, but even then without much social signification, I should say, *meaning in the brotherhood of men.*

As a natural connection between helm and brow, I shall trespass on your attention for a short time to explain something of these various ranks, existing already amongst us from time immemorial, but generally ascribed by the historians of England to their favourites, the Normans.

The cyning, as we have seen, was a president elected from a certain family in which the kingly dignity resided, and to which it had to be confined. There have been five different kinds of kings in the world. The father at the head of his family, exhibited in the Semitic races, especially among the Hebrews, as the patriarch; the elder, governing his descendants rather by his personal influence and powers of persuasion than anything else, as in the North-American sachem, the Arabian sheik, and the Tartar knyaz. Then comes the imperator, ruling his people as a general his army, and taking his style from the Roman name for a military commander; then the

despot, governing his people like slaves, without any check upon his absolute will and cruel caprice. But the Teutonic *könig*, *konung*, or king, differs from all the rest. Such a king is the outcome of the highest kind of human wisdom, being more beneficent in practice and more excellent in conception than any of the rest. The father king ceases to exist when the family becomes a tribe. He becomes either an emperor or a despot, who must be cast down by a strong hand to free his subject slaves from tyranny, too often to make room for a tyranny more cruel and more abominable, being that of many tyrants instead of one. It has been reserved for us barbarians to invent, before Rome fell, a system of personal as well as national government—a form of government that is enduring even now. The Anglo-Saxon *cynning* reigned as his kingly successors reign—by no Divine right. His office was the invention, and his appointment was the election, of the people.

On the establishment of the Anglo-Saxons in England, the various petty kings who came over in their “keels” to win some portion of the land, on dispossessing the Briton, waged, *more suo*, a war of extermination; and at first the king was the natural leader of his troops to war; but this, under the excellent system of our forefathers, it was not absolutely incumbent on him to be. A war-leader might be chosen to conduct his armed host on the war-path, while the king was engaged in the weightier matters of arranging the internal welfare of his kingdom. So the *herc-tog* (German, *herzog*; Swedish, *hertog*, or “army leader”—*dux*) was elected to represent the king in military matters. Unfortunately, we have chosen a Latin form of this word for

leader in our "duke"; and it is a curious coincidence that though the title "Duke" does not now of necessity imply military rank, the great commanders-in-chief of our army have always been distinguished by it; and the *here-tog* of the English host is a Royal Duke to-day.

The two grand representatives of ancient Teutonic nobility are the Earl and Baron. The earl was the Scandinavian *jarl* (yarl); and Max Müller finds in our English form of the word earl a corruption of *ealdor* (the elder), answering to the *senior* of the Romance side, existing in the words *seignor*, *señor*, *sieur*, and finally, in the contracted "sir" of our time. That *ealdor*, or *elder*, meant "senior" in the highest sense of the word—i.e., "superior"—I admit; and I know that the pronunciation of the Anglo-Saxon *e* before another vowel was equivalent to our *y*, like the Swedish and Danish *j*, so that *eálderman* was pronounced "yolderman", and the *jarl* (*jarl*) might have been a contraction of it; but jarls are heard of before *eálderman*, and it seems a little difficult to follow the history of these changes in the word, when history gives a different sequence of events to that which philology points out and requires. Still, Max Müller is too great an authority not to be listened to with profound respect, and I shall be glad to be convinced that he is right.

Thane we have seen to represent originally "servant", like our knight; but the subsequent titular rank depended upon landed property, for even if a *ceorl* obtained helm, byrnie, ring-mæl, and shield, if he had no land he was but a *ceorl* still. Thanes were of two kinds; king's thanes holding rank with earls, the lower or inferior

thanes being barons. The term baron is a Norman-Latin disguise for the Scandinavian English *bearn* (Scottish, *bairn*; Swedish, *barn*), "a noble child", or the inheritor of a noble house. In the older heroic poetry it means the noble warrior. So that our apparently Latin "baron" is English after all. Nevertheless, I wish their lordships would call themselves thanes, not to be outdone by their brethren the earls, and confounded with the meaningless Continental "Herr Baron".

The highest officer in the kingdom, next the king's son and kin, was the *eálderman*. The king's family, especially the sons, were called *Ethlinge*. The *eálderman* was the chief of a shire, and ranked with a bishop.

The next is the *eorl*. The *eorl's heriot*, or *here-geát*—"contribution to the army"—was four horses saddled and four horses not saddled, four helmets, four byrnie, eight spears and shields, four swords, and two hundred mancuses of gold, which was double that of a thane. Either could be elected as a *Here-tog*.

The *Gerefas* were officials appointed from the noble class, but their rank was inferior to that of the *eorl*. They had to look after the due execution of the law in their districts. One of them, the *scirgerefa*, lives in our own serio-comic "sheriff", while the German and Russian Counts are called *Graf*, from this very word.

The hall of an early Saxon noble was a long, lofty building of wood, supported in the centre by two posts on which were carved the rude resemblances of Thor and Odin. Between them, near one of the longest walls, was the high-bank, where the worthy Thegn sat and drank

health to his gods and his friends. The high-bank was the *dais* of later times. It was a platform raised above the floor, and large enough to accommodate the Hláford and Hláfðige, their family, and some specially honoured guests. The retainers and champions sat at tables not so raised, but standing on the floor, and arranged round the room, so that the warriors sat with their backs to the wall and their faces to the fire, which blazed in the centre of the hall. At the two extremities were the doors, where the servants, inferior retainers, and ceorls either sat or stood. Over the fire was suspended a huge cauldron, from which a generous *olla podrida* sent up its fragrant steam. Over the fire was a simple aperture in the roof, through which the smoke was expected to make its exit. Before doing so, however, it grandly blackened the rafters and inner side of the roof, so that the idea of spending a pleasant time in the winter was summed up in the expression, "*to drink under sooted roof.*"

The hláfðige sat on the high-bank, and the thanes and champions all around ; and when, for some deed of daring, a youthful white-shield warrior was to be formally admitted as a *cempe* (pronounced *chempy*, our "champion"; German, *kämpfer*), he was made to stand at the opposite side of the fire to that where the high-bank was. The lady then descended and reached him a horn of wine or else of the golden mead. This he then drank to her, to Thor and Odin, and his lord. Then he presented her his sword, which she handed to the hláford, who gave it back to her. Then the youthful warrior, bursting through the fire, received back his sword from her as the gift of his new lord. And now, if rings were given, she, the fair one

with the golden locks, gave him the gifts of golden rings, and raised their value by the graceful act.

This is highly poetical, chivalric, and refined for the time when we first appear so splendidly in history, as the liberators of the world from Roman tyranny. These customs and observances are fraught with meaning, and in them may be traced the better part of the refined chivalry of the later Middle Ages.

Our ancestors lived in a rude age, and they had no opera-boxes or Pulman cars, but never let a Latinist say that they were in any way inferior to the Romans, whom they crushed. When a respectable Teutonic gentleman sets up to be a classic, and mixes lines from Horace or Virgil, and quotes Cicero in his speeches, I always feel inclined to say, with the greatest of all authors and the truest Englishman that ever lived—"I had rather be a dog, and bay the moon, than SUCH a Roman!"

LECTURE VI.

BEADS, GLASSES, DRINKING-VESSLS, ETC.

THE consideration of these interesting relics, the preservation of which we owe to the labour, learning, skill and judgment of the gentlemen attached to this department of the public service, have led us insensibly from themselves to our fathers who owned them; and it has been my endeavour to accompany you on the road pointed out by these remains, back into the far-away past, to show you that, allowing for some changes wrought by time, what those people were who wore these things we are still, and what we are they were. We have had on this, to me, most pleasant journey occasion to see that the Anglo-Saxon race is the English race. As in our language more than two-thirds of the words we use are Saxon, and the remainder foreign expressions which will with time die out, so in the habits hinted at by these arms and ornaments we have traced nearly all of those elements in the national character which raise us above other nations to the so-called Anglo-Saxon stock. I have now, in this my concluding lecture, to point out to you many objects of intense interest to us, as heirs to this property.

We have already seen that the ladies of the Anglo-Saxon period were particular in their attire; that although they did not seek to attract admiration by too great a

display of their dress and adornments (being most carefully draped, in delightful harmony with the feelings of modesty and self-respect transmitted through more than twelve centuries uninjured to their daughters), they were yet women, and had a peculiar tact in the choice of their ornaments, which appeals even now from the tomb, and draws us to them again.

I have already told you that the necklace, although not the exclusive adornment of women, was more often found in the graves of ladies than in those of the men. There were certain stones famed as potent charms against the efforts of the dark elves. These we should expect to find among the beads in necklaces found in pagan tombs, but we find them in Christian burying-places too, showing us that the new faith did not quite stamp out and destroy the old; but as the remains of a former edifice are often used in raising a new house, so some—nay, many—of our old pagan superstitions have been built up into our Christianity. The very period of the year which we are approaching is a pagan feast, incorporated into the Church because the early Fathers could not get rid of it. The *Geola tíd*, or Yule tide, as we write it, was so called from *Geola*, the twelfth name of Odin; while the plum pudding, mince pies, holly, misletoe, and all the rest of it, are as pagan as *Hrolf Krake*, and yet we call them Christian things—Christian cheer, and so forth. They have lost their old lustre. As, in the case of the charming necklaces before us, it takes time and trouble, and much research, to detect what these stones are, and to say which is amber, which is glass, and which is stone, so, in the very observances of our hearths and homes, we can hardly

tell where Pagan Saxondom ends and Christianity begins.

For the pagan saw in his bracelet, his sword, and his necklace, tokens of the power of the Almighty arming man against mortal and supernatural enemies. To withstand the attacks of invisible foes, beads have been worn from very early ages. Our ladies would not like to think it a mark of barbarism to use so pretty an ornament. Nor is it so. There were reasons for the use of these things in the times before we left Anglia for Britain, and those reasons were founded in very profound views, some of which we shall endeavour to investigate.

The early founders of our race worshipped an Almighty God, of whom numerous attributes were predicated. By degrees, as men lost the power of comprehending interior abstract truth, they began to personify these attributes and make of them separate deities. So the forces of Nature took shape in the eyes of these men. Dwarfs worked underground and in the mountains; elves directed the activities, ever restlessly alive in the breeze, the wave, and the forest bough. Of these the greater part were good and healthful, working under the orders of All-father for the good of the human race. But the *swartalfar* arose, being of the kin of the Frost Giants, the sworn foes of man; and day and night are represented in the cosmos, as correlative terms with the antagonistic forces of good and evil. The love of God is opposed to the hatred of the neighbour and cold indifference to that neighbour's good, combined with over-weening self-love. So the arrows of the sun are directed against the *Frost Giants*, in whose very name we see all these evil qualities summed

up. This is mythology; this is the teaching of a higher truth under the guise of a parable, for "without a parable spake He not unto them." As our forefathers were always alive, more or less, to the fact that something lived within the letter, although the key to Nature's parable had been lost, they naturally began to ascribe extra mystic values to what had been mere symbolic teaching. We have seen that the Runes were regarded as endowed with magic power to affect these wonder-working beings that surrounded man at this period of his history on the globe. We have seen, also, that weapons of stone were placed in the tombs of warriors, to enable them to repel the attacks of the *swart alfar*, or black elves, against whom the cold steel was useless. So the sword of our hero Beowulf was melted by the poisonous blood of the Grendel's mother, whom he slew at last by means of an elfin blade, which he found in the cavern where she dwelt, under the bed of the dreary mere. Stone rings with Runic inscriptions are found in graves, to perform the same office, "and scare the fiends from the dead man's grave." There were certain stones, however, which, without any fashioning or adaptation by art, possessed the power required. Others were formed into beads and worn round the neck as amulets. Of this latter class amber was a most effectual armour against the Evil One; and this is marvellous, when we see what wonderful power it has really exerted on the descendants of these ancient sires of our race, through that force first observed in amber, the Greek name for which was *elektron*. Of course, the wearers of these amber beads knew nothing about electricity, but they believed in the dark elves, and they believed in the occult powers

possessed by these beads of repelling the attacks of their supernatural foes. I wonder whether we are better men and women than they were, because we believe in electricity and not in amber? The fact of this curious fossil-gum being regarded as a talisman, would lead us to expect to find it in the graves; and finding it so frequently bears out the statements of the saga-man, that it was a sure safeguard against the dark elves; and although Christianity might and did do away with the worship of Odin, it could not abolish the minor superstitions which clung around the old faith creeping at last into the new. And these "venerable beads" were used by pagan and Christian alike for very similar purposes; only, instead of swart-elves, we have in Christian days devils, and angels for the bright and beaming ones. The pagan lady wore her necklace, and in the arrangement of the richly-coloured beads she found protection from supernatural foes. The Christian nun wore a necklace, too, of beads, which helped her memory in prayer—beads which signified words and clauses in the one prayer common to all the Christian world. Her beads were blessed by holy men, and also had occult powers in no respect dissimilar to those attributed by the pagan to his. In Russia, at a certain monastery, amber beads are now sold as a specific against sore-throat. Shall we scorn our pagan foremothers for doing what our Christian ancestors did devoutly, until the Reformation gave them, what the Anglo-Saxon Church had given them before—Prayer-books in their own tongue?

You will see that in the porcelain, or, at all events, dried clay beads, in these glass-cases, the colours are as fresh as though they had been laid on some few years back, instead of ten or twelve centuries ago. What must their

brilliancy have been in the days when they were new, glowing from the skilled hand of the workman ?

The custom of interring the dead in full dress is essentially Teutonic, and it is practised in Germany still, where in many parts of the country ladies save their wedding-dresses to serve as funeral garments. When cremation took place, it did not follow that the dress and ornaments were burnt with the body; nor have we any direct evidence as to the period when cremation was introduced into the North; the most difficult part of the inquiry being the puzzling information that it was brought from the East by Odin. Now, as the historical Odin is a fiction, the assertion that the custom of burning the dead was his introduction is embarrassing. It certainly prevailed in the North at a very early period, and then was superseded by interment, which, however, seems to have been a revival of an ancient custom. When interment took place, the chief who could afford the luxury of a spacious tomb was buried with such of his belongings as would be needed in Valhalla; and this custom lived on into Christian times, although Valhalla had passed away, to be succeeded by the golden *Gimle*, which shall last for ever. So, despite the advent of the religion of the Cross, the ornaments both of men and women accompanied them to the tombs; and, thanks to the survival of this custom, we are now enabled to trace many habits and customs of our sires, which otherwise would have been wholly lost to us.

Some of the beads in the British Museum are of coloured clay, others of glass, some are of agate, some of amber, and they are all in a remarkably high state of preservation. Beads, whether borne as talismans or carried as

ornaments, were evidently greatly in favour with Anglo-Saxon ladies; and the taste with which the colours in the burnt-clay beads are combined and contrasted, is as striking as the evidence of great skill in producing them. But, besides these pretty beads, we have a great variety of articles pertaining to the toilette which appeal more strongly to the imagination than any romance ever written. There is a tender touch of humanity that links us to the long Past which certainly ought not to be rudely put aside. There are proofs in these funeral remains of cleanliness of person, of pride in appearance, and of refinement of habits, which our Latinised historians would never ascribe to any nation not under Roman influence. The combs found everywhere in graves of men and women show how careful they were to keep the long golden or raven locks in perfect order. The smaller instruments attached to the chatelaine show a refined taste, requiring tooth-pick, ear-spoon, and tweezers. The tooth-brush was unknown, and therefore the tooth-pick was necessary; nor is it very long since gold tooth-picks were common among us. Dickens, in the *Christmas Carol*, furnishes the miser Scrooge with this instrument. The tweezers were used for the removal of superfluous hair. This little cluster of toilette requisites is an early form of the chatelaine of some years back, which may yet live in the memory of some of those here present. The hairpins, worn in parts of the north of Germany, are similar to those here preserved; the ear-rings are met with in Sweden and Norway that we find taken from the graves of our ancestors in Kent; and the custom of wearing gold coins set as ear-rings and brooches is now common all over the world.

The minute morsels of bronze worked into portions of jewellery, pins, keys, small hooks, finely-worked buckles, and various knick-knacks in bronze, unite in proving the delicacy of touch as well as of judgment and taste possessed by the inhabitants of early England. The delicate filigree-work for which the English were famed is shown in some of the more perfect specimens, and that "finish" in the workmanship for which English workmen are still unrivalled on the Continent, is manifest in all.

In the tombs of the men we find drinking-vessels, horns occasionally, and sometimes glass vessels made in the form of the earlier horn. Besides which, the remains of stoups are extremely common. In these stoups, or very near them, are found perforated spoons. These two latter articles of domestic use have occasioned much discussion among antiquaries, but there can be no doubt that they were used in the consumption of food. To this subject I shall return presently. Among the most remarkable utensils in the collection may be classed the long and graceful drinking-glasses, with such wealth of ornamentation superadded. These glasses are found all through Kent, in Gloucestershire, and in Germany. The ornament is everywhere the same; sometimes the form of the vessel itself is longer, sometimes broader, but the extraordinary pendant-drop of glass, shaped like the proboscis of an elephant, and affixed to the vessel all round the middle, leaving, however, a sufficient space clear to admit of its being drunk from with comfort, is the same in all. Another form is the prototype of our tumbler; it will not stand, because the bottom is so rounded as to afford no support if the utensil be set down. Consequently, the drinker had to empty his glass before he could place it on

the board. This points to habits of intemperance, in which we know our forefathers indulged, and which live among us, forming the chief horror of "Horrible London." So that our vices and our virtues are Anglo-Saxon at heart.

The unfortunate bias of most men of learning to that Roman craze which only admits of the consideration of Roman remains, ignores the importance of Anglo-Saxon, and shuts us out from them altogether. If a Roman helmet be found, if a slab of Roman pavement turns up, we are told that something *important* has been discovered in the illustration of the history of England; but when a grand discovery is made, tenderly connecting us with our fatherland and mother-tongue, the learned antiquary is rather surprised that the Anglo-Saxons should presume to have anything like interesting remains at all. And if there be such unmistakable marks of interest in such antiquities, he tries to connect them with Rome, as bad copies from Roman models.

By the earlier chroniclers of our own history, we are told that the first Scandinavian settlers in the island consisted of three tribes of that race—the Jutes, who established themselves in Kent, in the Isle of Wight, and on a part of the opposite coast of Hampshire; the Saxons, subdivided into East, Middle, South, and West Saxons; and the Angles, who occupied the larger share of the country, as East Angles, Mercians, and the Angles of Northumbria. Mr. Thomas Wright, the eminent antiquary, suggested about twenty years ago that steps should be taken to investigate the various kinds of graves made by these three branches of the Anglo-Saxon race, with a view to discovering what the differences in their

customs may have been. He himself examined many Kentish barrows with peculiar care, and he states that the brooches of the Kentish graves were almost all round in form, while the *preons* in East Anglian graves were of the cruciform kind. He asserts that wherever the Angles settled, these cross-like *preons* occur. The cup, or rather saucer-like brooch, is found in the West of England, from Hampshire to Gloucestershire. The complicated cruciform brooch is, as I stated in a former lecture, emphatically and decidedly pagan. The form would lead people to attribute it to Christian influences; but we must remember *that the cross is not a Christian invention*. The Saviour was crucified by pagans who had used the form of the cross largely in various ways, long before the crucifixion of Our Lord. So that the discovery of so many wonderful *spangen* and *preons* in Kent only shows that the Angles were very staunch in their adherence to paganism.

It has been suggested that the little buckets, of which fragments are to be seen in several of these cases, were most probably supplied to the recumbent warrior filled with mead, a preparation of honey forming a fermented drink much favoured by our ancestors. The Scandinavians introduced this beverage into Russia a thousand years ago, where it still remains in use. But it does not seem probable that, in these graves, the horn or glass would have been added, if mead had been drunk from such utensils only, nor would a perforated spoon have been requisite, mead being a liquid as readily quaffed from a horn as wine or beer. The fact is, that our antiquaries have been so anxious to supply their ancestors with the means of drinking, that they have forgotten their need of some-

thing to eat! With strong evidences of a high state of refinement in certain directions, we must not forget that with all their love of silver and gold plate, our beloved forefathers had not attained to the refinement of silver, or even of iron table-forks, which were not in general use before the sixteenth century. There is not the shadow of a doubt that they used a small fork in serving meat from the vessel in which it was presented to the guests; but what we call table-forks were totally unknown. We read in the prose Edda, that the warriors who are chosen from the battle-field are fed in Valhalla upon mead which they drink from horns, and upon stewed boar's flesh, which is served round to them in "vats". Vat, of course, is a term meaning any kind of vessel (the German *Gefäss*; Anglo-Saxon *fæt*). To get at the solid morsels of meat, supposing the vat to be full of soup, with pieces of flesh in it, like the mock-turtle of our own modern eálderman, such a perforated spoon would be the very thing. The liquid part would run through the little holes, and the lumps of meat would remain in the bowl. When this too solid flesh had melted before the attack of the sharp-set hero, he would place the little bucket which still contained the liquid, and drink it off in the manner suggested by "Jacob Faithful", and called by Marryat "shipping in bulk"

Still, I can only advance this as a theory. Another portion of the prose Edda is somewhat against me. I therefore present you with it, especially as it gives a description of the "Joys of Valhalla" there given. The interlocutors are Odin, disguised as Gángler, and Har, "the High One", discussing the wonders of Valhalla.

"If it be as thou hast told me", said Gángler, "that all men who have fallen in fight since the beginning of the

world are gone to Odin in Valhalla, what has he to give them to eat, for methinks there must be a great crowd there?"

"What thou sayest is quite true", replied Har, "the crowd there is indeed great; but great though it be, it will still increase, and will be thought too little when the Wolf comes. But however great the band of men in Valhalla may be, the flesh of the boar Sæhrimnir will more than suffice for their sustenance. For although this boar is sodden every morning, he becomes whole again every night. But there are few, methinks, who are wise enough to give thee in this respect a satisfactory answer to thy question. The cook is called Andhrimnir, and the kettle Eldhrimnir. Thus 'Andhrimnir cooks Sæhrimnir in Eldhrimnir.' 'Tis the best of flesh, though few know how much is required for the Einherjar."

"What have the heroes to drink", said Gángler, "in sufficient quantity to correspond to their plentiful supply of meat? Do they only drink water?"

"A very silly question is that", replied Har; "dost thou imagine that All-Father would invite kings and jarls, and other great men, and give them nothing to drink but water? There is a she-goat, named Heidrun; she stands above Valhalla, and feeds on the leaves of a very famous tree called Lærath, and from her is milked mead in such great abundance, that every day a stoup, large enough to hold more than would suffice for all is obtained."

Bearing in mind that *sæ* is the sea, emblematical of mere external knowledge, that *and* is spirit, and *eld* fire, we are enabled to read the teaching of the myth thus:— External requirements in the mind are of no real use until

they are acted upon by love (fire) through the activity of the higher element, the spirit. The suffix *hrimnir* signifies that which encrusts or covers, like a frosty rime (the English form of *hrím*). This always denotes something lower or in an inferior degree; hence its addition to each of the substantives *sæ*, *and*, and *eld*, is representative of their not being of the highest degree to which they are capable of attaining. Accordingly, the heaven of which they are predicated is inferior to that which shall succeed it and which shall never pass away.

Here we have a decided use for our stoup or little bucket, only nothing is said about the little spoon. Perhaps the bucket was used for both purposes. I throw out this suggestion in the hope of gaining some information.

In that part of our collection where some German antiquities of a similar age and character to our own are displayed, you will see a model of the horn in glass, concerning the functions of which article there is no question. The horn of the Orochs was the original drinking-cup of our race; it held no mean potion, as anyone may learn by looking at the stuffed specimens of the Orochs in the Natural History part of the British Museum. Such a horn, filled with foaming mead or strong beer, would be more than sufficient for most men at the present day, but the Odinic warriors were accustomed to drain it at one draught, and repeat the dose pretty frequently. The maidens of the establishment of a great lord or king had the duty of constantly replenishing the horns as they were emptied by the warriors. If a horn were set down with any portion of the generous fluid remaining in it, that portion was spilt and wasted. Thus the ancient horn was like the more modern glass, or rather tumbler, in its

enmity to sobriety. Two magnificent specimens of tipped drinking horns are to be seen in the British Museum collection. They are from the tumulus at Taplow. In the sixth century there seems to have been a refinement in this respect, for we read, at about that period, of horns with two gold feet attached to a ring, passing round the middle, so that the taper-end, resting on the board, would, with these two feet, form a tripod, and present, on a large scale, the appearance familiar to us all in the porcelain ornament formed like a Roman cornucopia placed on a slab of marble, sometimes seen gracing a mantel-shelf or cabinet in our rooms.

A curious misunderstanding of the Scaldic periphrasis of our ancestors has blackened their memories to a fearful extent, and, as it is intimately connected with our subject, I will mention it at once.

A slur has been cast upon the character of our forefathers by the Latinists, who state that the Teutons were in the habit of drinking wine from the skulls of their enemies! This calumny has arisen from a want of knowledge of the way in which a Scald would express himself. The assertion that the heroes on certain occasions drank large quantities of wine from the ordinary drinking horn, is clothed in the somewhat obscure figure of "drinking wine from the curved adornment of the head of the fell ones". Here the "fell ones" have been taken to mean ordinary human enemies, whereas the terrible wild bison-like bull, the Orochs, is meant. The "curved adornment of the head" has been taken to imply the arched skull, of which indeed a tolerable cup might be made, but not so capacious a drinking vessel as the gigantic horn, to which the expression applied. The real fact

is, that such a proceeding would have been out of the line of the Scandinavians altogether. They did not mutilate the dead bodies of their foes. They had a contempt of death, and they had no hesitation in offering up victims to Odin. They practised cruelties also, but wanton savagery like that which would lead a man to cut and hack a dead body was, as a rule, foreign to their nature. Their use of the horn is history, that of the skull is not.

A curious myth is given in Snorri Sturlson's Edda, which I do not think it likely you have heard anything about, and therefore I shall draw your attention to a portion of it which has direct bearing on our subject. I have already referred to the important truth that in all pre-Christian Mythologies some account is given of the descent of Divinity. In India we have the Avatars. In Hellenic myths we are constantly reminded of the conflict between the gods and some gigantic or evil influences inimical to man. These evil principles are overcome by the descent of the Divine to rescue man from their cruel bondage. Such tales are told of the gods of Valhalla, the descending deity being in this case Thor, who is always engaged in combat with the Frost giants. The peculiar disposition of our ancestors invested the incarnate deity with Scandinavian attributes, and Thor visits Yotunheim, the abode of Utgárd Loki, very much as a champion on the look out for adventures. Of these there is no lack, but they all consist in some desperate trial of his strength and skill, by which he brings the monsters into fearful jeopardy. One of these trials consists in his having to drink from a long drinking-horn, which is brought to him by a cup-bearer.

Thor looked at the horn, which seemed of no extraordinary size, though, as was said, somewhat long; however, as he was very thirsty, he set it to his lips, and, without drawing breath, pulled as long and as deeply as he could, that he might not be obliged to make a second draught of it; but, when he set the horn down and looked in, he could scarcely perceive that the liquor was diminished.

"'Tis well drunk," exclaimed Utgárd-Loki, though nothing to boast of; and I would not have believed, had it been told me, that Asa Thor could not have taken a greater draught; but thou, no doubt, wilt make up for lost time in the second pull."

Thor answered never a word, but attacked the horn a second time with hearty good-will. Still, when he took it from his mouth, he thought that he had drunk rather less than before, judging by the small diminution that appeared in the contents.

"How now, Thor?" said Utgárd Loki. "If thou wilt drain that horn at the third draught, thou hast left thyself hard work to do at the last. Thou wilt not be considered much of a hero among us, if thy draughts are no deeper than these!"

Thor, in a rage, took the horn again, and drank his stoutest; but, when he set it down again, he saw that the liquid, although reduced in quantity, might be said, practically, to be nearly as it was before.

Utgárd-Loki taunts him and urges him on to the attempt of other adventures, in all of which Thor seems baffled; but on bringing him, the next morning, out of the city, Utgárd-Loki informs him that his seeming defeats were the result of enchantment. We have only

to do with the horn part of the myth, which Utgárd-Loki explains in this wise :

“When thou didst endeavour to empty the horn, thou didst indeed perform a feat so marvellous that, had I not seen it myself, I never could have believed it ; for one end of that horn reached the sea. Of this fact thou couldst know nothing, on account of my *galder* (enchantment); but when thou comest to the shore thou wilt perceive how much the sea has sunk by thy draughts ; for, whereas it should be high tide, it is now so low an ebb as never yet was known.”

In the same way he shows Thor how all the other trials he had gone through were full of occult meaning, and were, in fact, marvellous achievements. Thor hears him in patience to the end, when he seizes his hammer to despatch him at once ; but he had vanished, and where the city had stood, lay now a smiling plain. Thor returns to Thrudvang, his special hall in Valhalla, to mature his plans for overthrowing the whole brood of monsters. Utgárd-Loki returns to his compeers, saying, “Thor comes with his hammer ! I laugh at him ; evil is immortal, just the same as good.”

Here we have a myth of most profound teachings. The descent of deity is shown, a conquest effected over evil, which by the craft and subtlety of the evil principles is made to appear as if it had not been achieved at all. The sea signifies external scientific knowledge, which although necessary, is not able to refresh and interiorly benefit man. But, under the dominion of evil, man allows such attainments to take the place of spiritual truth, represented by the clear waters of such springs as Urdur's fountain and Mimer's well. That man should not

be overwhelmed by floods of useless external acquirements, they are reduced in power, represented by the low ebb of the sea. The enchantment shows the subtlety of the Evil One in keeping the true origin of much worldly lore out of sight. The reduction of the floods is seen to be a special act of divine power, and is viewed in the light of a miracle.

So completely had the horn become identified with our forefathers that it could hardly have been omitted in a grand funeral outfit, preparing a warrior for the joys of Valhalla; accordingly we find it everywhere, when the materials of which it is made permit. To drink healths was not only a polite attention but a religious duty. The Scandinavians, Saxons, and Germans proper, drank to the health of their deceased friends, and to their gods in Valhalla. So deeply had this custom taken root among them, that long after the introduction of Christianity the health of the Saviour was substituted at feasts for that of Thor or Odin, as we learn from many highly interesting Scandinavian Sagas. It may be seen in the story of the Yomsburg Pirates, given in Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*, published in Bohn's series; and is one among the many proofs of the difficulty that existed in removing the external observances of the old faith from the everyday life of the northern nations, of which, indeed, they had become part. There were many of them. The Christian religion only insists on two, Baptism and the Holy Communion. We, direct descendants of Scandinavian pagans, retain most of the pagan customs of our sires under the gloss of Christian appellations. The rite of Baptism is declared by Ælfrie to be necessary *after* Confirmation, and this observance had fallen into disuse

already, in his time, the rite being chiefly administered to children. I have been told that there are more persons in England zealously observing the pagan rites at the Yule-tide, than people who adopt the simpler ordinance enjoined at the commencement of the Christian era. If this be true, it shows what firm hold paganism has upon us, and what thorough pagans our forefathers must have been to have transmitted so much to us.

The deep draughts from the full horn, and from the vat or wooden vessel, were parts of English pagan *culte*, and could not be separated from the life of the stout-hearted warrior who indulged in them; and as his future life was to be a continuance of the joys of this, it is no wonder that so important an element in those joys should be well provided for, and therefore we find in the graves of the early English not only the sword, shield, spear, arrow, javelin, brooch, and arm-ring, but the very vessels that would be required for the drinking-bout as well. Here, too, let me call your attention to a very remarkable circumstance in the religion of our ancestors. There is a god of purity, but no god of drunkenness. There is no Bacchus, no Silenus, no Bacchantes, no riotous, drunken rites. In mid-hall, in winter, our ancestors feasted and drank mead; to excess they drank occasionally; but the cups were social, and involved no such revolting orgies as the saturnalia. In the whole system there is a dignified simplicity of which we might well be proud, as being exponential of high moral tone and purity of thought. There is nothing in the Eddas of which a man ought to feel ashamed after perusal. While in the accounts of the repulsive rites of Bacchus, Pan, and other *deities* (heaven save the mark!) whose very names I should blush to utter

we are thrown into a world of profligacy, vice, and wickedness of the most sickening kind. This we teach our sons as the wisdom of the ancients, and then wonder that they are not all that a pure English matron could wish! Is it not time to stop this? Is it of so much consequence to us, as Englishmen, to know the secrets of refined vice familiar to the inhabitants of foreign states like Greece and Rome, as to know the high-souled teachings of our own simple sires, who owed nothing to those classic lands? There are many who will pick out portions of our mythology, and hold them up to ridicule as grotesque and unfamiliar, rude and unpolished. A little examination, however, will soon show that such ridicule is most undeserved. One thing is certain, too, that if mythology be worth studying at all, it is better worth while to study that of our own hearts and homes, than that of the stranger in thought and blood.

Convinced of the truth of his creed, sure of the immortality of his soul, the Scandinavian Englishman was careful in his burial that it should be, as he believed it was, the door and way to eternal life. And now, having led him through life, from the Sunday of his birth in the light and life of All-Father, through the age of mature Wisdom under the guidance of the All-wise, through combats with gigantic evils, to the proud reward of Freya, who bestows on him a mate as pure and spotless as his Northern snows, and yet as faithful, good, and true as Nanna, we prepare him for Satur, who comes in devouring flames. This earth passes away for the warrior, and he enters upon a new heaven and a new earth. For even Valhalla shall be succeeded by Gimle the Golden, where,

the refining fire, the joys eternal, shall be beyond conception. Having shown you, by the aid of these dear relics the inner life of our noble forefathers, I will now tell you something about their funerals, and that grave from which we have seen their virtues rise "even in their ashes living their wonted fire."

The generally received opinion among antiquaries is that the earliest form of burial was interment with arms and other belongings complete; after this succeeded a period in which cremation was common; and then came a revival of the interment system. The earlier interment was very simple, consisting of nothing more than the covering of the body with a heap of rude stones; but more frequently a kind of vault was constructed of loose stones, the outside ones being arranged in regular layers. Such kinds of vaults, though found occasionally in Denmark, are more frequently to be met with in Norway, and do not appear to have been covered with earth. When the deceased was a person of distinction, a high mound or barrow was generally raised over his remains. Most Scandinavian barrows are either round or oblong, and some of them have rows of upright stones set round them. Some oblong barrows have been found to contain two cinerary stone chests, one at each end and occasionally one in the middle. Round barrows were commonly raised over stone vaults or mortuary chambers, in which the dead body was deposited, either buried in sand or laid out on a flat stone, and sometimes placed in a sitting posture. Barrows of this description have frequently two or more vaults, and there is generally a passage in the eastern or southern side leading to and on a level with the mortuary

chambers. Barrows with wooden chambers are said to be the most recent of all.

In the preface to the *Ynglinga Saga*, Snorri makes a distinction between the age of burning—*Brúna öld*, and the age of burial—*Haugs öld*, but there is every probability that the two customs flourished at the same time. Beowulf gives instructions for his own funeral, and orders the wood to be brought from afar ; and then it is said :

“Nú sceal gléd fretan
wyrðan wonna leg
wigena strengel,
þhonne 8c oft gebád
isern scúres
þhonne stræla storm
strengum gebæded,
scóc ofer scyld-weall.”

“Now shall the gleed devour
(Fate’s fell flame)
the king of champions,
him who oft abided
the iron shower
when the storm of arrows,
bid forth from bow-strings,
shook o’er the shield wall.”

Farther on, in Fytte XLIII, we are told :

“Him thá gegiredon
Geáta leóde
ád on eorðan
unwáclíene
helm behongen
hilde-bordum
beorhtum byrnum
swá he béna wæs.
Alegdon thá tó middes
mærne theóden,
hæleth hiófende.
hláford leófne :
ongunnon thá on beorge
bæl-fyramæst
wigend weccan :
wudu-rec astáh
sweart of Swio-thole,

“For him then prepared
the Goths’ people
a pile on earth,
a mighty one,
with helmets hung,
with war board
and bright byrnies
as he had requested.
Laid then in the midst
the great prince,
the warriors lamenting
their beloved lord :
began then on the hill
of bale-fires the greatest
the warriors to waken :
wood smoke arose
swart from the Swedish pine,

swogende leg
 wópe bewunden
 wind-blond gelæg
 oðthæt he thæt bân-hús
 gebrocen hæfde
 hát on hrethre.

* * . * *

Geworhton ðá,
 Wedra leóde,
 hlæw on hlithe ;
 se wæs heáh and brád,
 wæg-lithendum
 wide tó-syne
 and betimbredon
 on tyn dagum
 beada-rófes beácon
 wealle beworhton,
 swá hit weorthlicost
 fore-snotre men
 findan mihton.
 Hi on beorg dydon.
 beágas and siglu."

the roaring flame
 mingled with weeping
 the wind gusts were stilled
 until it had broken
 that fortress of bone
 hot on the breast.

* * * *

They wrought then,
 the Werders people,
 a mound on the hill ;
 it was high and broad,
 by way-farers
 widely to be seen,
 and it was builded
 in ten days
 the renowned warrior's beacon,
 they with a wall surrounded it,
 as it most worthy
 the wisest among men
 might find.
 They in the mound placed
 rings and ornaments."

It is then stated that the treasure of earls was now left for the earth to hold, "*gold on greóte*," "gold in the dust." And the poem concludes with a fine picture of the armed champions riding round the funeral pile of the hero bewailing their king. Here we have the mound and the burial of the belongings of the champion, with his ashes, excepting the armour and other articles which he had previously given to his friend and retainer.

The body of Baldur, before being consigned to the care of Hela, is placed on a funeral pyre called the *bál* ; and at Torneá, when the sun is seen red at midnight, they say there that the ruddy glow is caused by Baldur's funeral rites, which are repeated every year when the sun begins

to leave the heavens preparatory to his sojourn in the realms of death and cold.

The funeral mound was an object of great respect all through the North. It was said to be under the special guardianship of Odin, and its sanctity was never violated. In later times this awe in the presence of the tomb has survived in countless superstitions and ghost stories. Among the prophetesses or female magicians were those, in the Anglo-Saxon times, who could call the spirit of the departed from the dominions of Death by a peculiar chaunt; and the phantom, or *scín-líca*, was frequently invoked in the interest of the living.

As in *Beowulf*, the Scandinavian *grafhögar*, or grave-mounds, are generally built on some promontory, so that the song of the waves may soothe the warriors' slumbers, and at the same time the mounds should afford landmarks or beacons to those returning from sea.

When a warrior started on a fresh expedition on his dragon ship, or "war swan", he was accustomed to dig up a piece of turf from his native land (*foster eorþ*) of the size of his sword-blade squared, *i.e.*, each side of the square-piece was as long as his sword-blade. Failing turf, he would take a vessel of the earth, or sand, or dust of his father's grave-mound, and carry this on board his ship, so as always to have some of the North-land with him. These men carried Scandinavia with them wherever they went, and re-named places after the old spots at home in a most touching manner. They have left us a large inheritance of this love of country; and even those of our race who have divided themselves so widely from the parent soil as to seek homes in a still farther West, yearn

for the tales of the English kin in a newer England, which, instead of being the home of a strange, new race, is in some respects more English than the old. We have taken a large handful of the earth of Scandinavia with us, and the volcanic ashes that have overwhelmed the profligate nests of Herculaneum and Pompeii have no power to injure our Foster-jord.

A highly-interesting custom of the Anglo-Saxons, recently pointed out to me by my friend Mr. Walter de Gray Birch, of the MS. Department of the British Museum, is also, in all probability, closely allied to this old observance. When a grant of land was made to a church in the Christian days of a later period, it seems to have been usual to place a clod of turf on the high altar in dedication to the Creator, to whose special service the whole land was supposed thenceforward to be devoted. An account of this custom will be found in the *Cartularium Saxonicum*, a work on the basis of Kemble's *Codex Diplomaticus*, which Mr. Birch is now bringing out, a book which no person interested in the customs of our ancestors ought to be without. Kemble's work has long been out of print, and Mr. Birch has supplied a want which has been greatly felt.

In the opening of *Beowulf* we are presented with a weird picture of a ship-burial, which is not, however, given as a specimen of an ordinary custom, but as a peculiar incident well adapted for a sort of sensational commencement. It is the funeral of Scyld that is described. He is placed near the mast of the war-ship, with all his arms, armour, and ornaments round him. When all is ready he is launched forth upon the bosom

of the waters, and is never heard of more. This is in allusion to the manner in which, in his infancy, he had reached the Danish shore as a child in an open boat.

Examples are mentioned in Scandinavian works of a warrior being interred with ship and arms in his grave-mound, which is then built over him. Another form of ship-burial is where the warrior is laid on the ground of his grave, with a ship, or boat, inverted over him, and then covered with earth and stones. Occasionally such a nautical tomb has enclosed many slain. Sometimes large stones are found in Norway and Sweden of an almost cubical form, standing some eight or ten feet out of the earth. These are quite without inscription, but have been raised to the memory of heroes fallen in the service of Odin. Such a monument is called a *Bautasten*, and in all probability possessed inscriptions, which have been worn away by time. The hill, or mound, is called *Graf-hög* in Swedish and *haugr* in Icelandic.

In Britain, the Roman and Romanized British tumuli are generally found isolated, never in larger groups than two or three, while the English grave-mounds are arranged in groups of considerable numbers. A great peculiarity in English burial is that not only is the mound raised over the body, but an actual grave is dug to the depth of some feet, in which the warrior is laid, sometimes, though rarely, with his wife and other members of his family. This has probably saved them from being plundered by curiosity hunters, who, finding nothing on what they would consider to be the floor of the mound, never dreamt of digging deeper into the actual grave. Many

of these mounds have been opened and examined ; they all appear to have been constructed with great care and neatness. They are chiefly rectangular, about six feet deep, ten feet long, and eight feet broad, some being larger and some smaller. The grave being covered in, a circular mound was raised over it, which was sometimes strengthened with stones, and turfed. Occasionally, human bones and Keltic skulls are found in the upper mound, being those of slaves killed to attend their master in Valhalla, *but these are rarely found in the grave proper*. When two skeletons are found together, one is that of a woman, evidently the wife of the man ; they are always side by side. The bodies in English graves are always laid on the back ; save in those rare cases when Keltic skulls have been found in an English grave, when they are *always* discovered face downwards, to denote their servile condition ; there are, as far as I know, at least, no traces of their being found in a sitting posture, as is the case in Scandinavia. In the grave are two niches, one at the head, and the other at the feet, probably made for the reception of bread and other articles of consumption, of which no traces have been left. “In a grave at Asengell, in the Isle of Thanet, the skeletons of a man, his wife, and little daughter were found. The lady lay in the middle, enfolding in her right arm the left arm of her husband, and holding with the other that of her daughter.”* Such a “grave of a household” is quite sufficient to remove the stain of barbarism from the pagan English name. There is a touching pathos in the group that is rather too holy for mere idle speculation, but it is a grand subject

* Wright's *Essays on Archæological Subjects*, vol. i, p. 143.

for a poet to dwell on in a poem illustrative of the manners and customs of our race.

Although in Scandinavian sources mention is made of coffins, none have been found in England. In all probability they were not used, because we find traces of the shaft of the spear on the floor of the grave in the form of a fine powder. That a wooden coffin should have perished is to be expected; but then the remains of the spear-shaft would have mingled with the dust of the wood of the coffin, and have been lost for ever. The construction of the pagan Saxon grave is more like the grave of our modern churchyard than we should have expected to find it. It is sufficiently marked from the Roman tumulus and British barrow, to show us, among other things, to which race we belong, while the many remains found therein corroborate the story told in the language of our homes.

Among the warlike articles discovered in our graves, no mention has ever been made of the "token", or standard of some particular chief borne by him as a badge, and being, in fact, what modern heralds would call his cognizance. I fancy that the curved piece of bronze with the dragon's head lying among the later Saxon objects was of this class. It is a fragment, but evidently a fragment of something carried for display, and most certainly not ecclesiastical in design or use. That few of such "tokens" have come down to us is not surprising. There are few swords and few shield bosses, few spear and arrow-heads, but in proportion to the multitude of these arms which must have existed in the island, the number of tokens must always have been very small; and when we reflect how few arms have been preserved to us, we

may be surprised at finding even one such token remaining. But if this be one, or part of one, it is not the only example of such a thing among us. There is a most beautiful and interesting relic known as "King's Alfred's Jewel", now preserved in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. It was found in the year 1693 at Newton Park some distance north of the site of Athelney Abbey, in Somersetshire, near the junction of the Parret and the Tone, the spot to which Alfred retired during the Danish troubles, and where he afterwards founded a monastery.

It was, in the year 1698, in the possession of Colonel Nathaniel Palmer; and in 1718 his son, Thomas Palmer, presented it to the Ashmolean Museum. The setting of the gem is of pure gold, containing coloured stones, covered by a remarkably thick crystal, through which is seen the miniature formed of enamelled mosaic, the compartments being let into cells of gold; the figure is that of a man holding a *fleur-de-lis* in each hand. Though manufactured more than a thousand years ago, it is in perfect preservation, and only looks a little dull and dingy, considering the great length of time that has passed over it. The length of the gem is about two inches, and it is about half an inch thick. Round the edge are engraved the words: "*Alfred, mec heht gewyrean.*" "*Alfred, me commanded to be made.*" The narrow end of the gem, at which the first and last words of this inscription meet, is formed into the head of a griffin, the national emblem of the Saxons, having in its mouth a small tube traversed by a strong rivet, to which a chain was probably attached. On the reverse of the gem, the lower jaw is wanting, and its place is supplied by a scaly flat surface.

The figure represents St. Neot, and this portrait of him

enabled the king to assure his soldiers that the saint was with him, that he had seen him going on before him; that he would not forsake him, with similar assertions which kept up the spirits of the soldiers. It was precisely such a device as a clever leader might resort to in such an emergency, and from the socket, pin, and supposed chain there is every proof that it was made to be fixed on a staff and borne as a standard or token.

And such an instrument, I believe, was the enigmatical piece of workmanship in this collection. My old and highly-valued friend, Mr. Henry Syer Cuming, one of the Vice-presidents of the British Archæological Association, wrote a paper for the journal of that body, in which he expresses the great interest he feels in the elucidation of the riddle presented by this fragment, and I am sure he will be glad if my theory be the right one.

The excellent workmanship of Alfred's jewel corroborates several statements that English jewellers were famed in the Saxon times for their skill; and earlier than Alfred's reign their work seems to have been contraband on the Continent. Charlemagne wrote a letter to Offa, King of Mercia, before 795, in which he says that "if, among those who wish to repair to the threshold of the blessed Apostles (Rome), there he found any travelling not in the service of religion, but in the pursuit of gain, let them pay the established dues at the proper places". As such pilgrims could not have smuggled bulky articles, it is evident that the coveted English jewellers' work was what they could best conceal. They were, according to Macpherson, in his *Annals of Commerce*, "celebrated all over Europe at this early period."

Thus our forefathers had skilled workmen of all kinds,

and, as now, English workmen were celebrated for the *finish* of their productions; and so great was their proficiency in the manufacture of highly-finished trinkets of gold and silver, that the most celebrated artists of Germany visited England, and articles wrought in gold and silver were the principal exportations from England.

My object has been to show you that in this room—one of the smallest in the Museum—there is enough to prove to us that the early English were a highly cultivated, civilised, and refined people, albeit their civilisation was not that of Rome. Our history has to do with us and our ancestors directly, and with other ancient people, of course, collaterally. But, as we did not derive our mythology from Greece or Rome, nor our language, nor our arts, nor our principles of action, it has long struck me that the effort to ascribe all our early civilisation to Rome, because she happened to be civilised, was wrong. I feel that a great injury has been done this country by the absurd affectation of Latinity in language, and the assumption of classic manners by us who are Teutons. I appeal loudly against the folly which has banished the language and thought of Alfred, Cædmon, Spenser, and Shakespeare, to the nursery, for the sake of an inferior “*culte*”, unsuited to our genius, but followed and vulgarly aped because it was classic. I cannot read the riddle, *Davus sum non Œdipus*—I am a Barbarian, a Goth, thank God! and not descended, any more than you, from Greek or Roman.



